Social Work and Its Relationship to other Disciplines

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Introduction

Social work has been called a helping profession, a problem solving profession or an enabling profession. To qualify to be a profession, social work should meet several criteria. One of the major criteria is that it should have its own knowledge base (Greenwood, 1957; 44-55). It should be able to produce knowledge and its practice should repeatedly validate. Theories and concepts should be formulated which explain the relationship between various factors that influence human behaviour. Models for interventions should be formulated to solve problems. However social work, as it is a helping profession, has a major limitation in this area. Most social workers are engaged in practice with little time for developing theoretical perspectives. Social work academics are often criticized for producing research (knowledge) which is not of much use to practicing professionals.

Social work in the early period of growth depended to a large extent on knowledge derived from other disciplines like psychology, sociology, economics and political science. However since 1970s social work scholarship has broadened and deepened its scope. The profession's self generated fund of knowledge has expanded substantially (Reamer in Reamer, 1994; 1). But this does not mean that social work's

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engagement with other disciplines has reduced or limited. This chapter will give you an overview about the relationship between social work and other disciplines.

**Evolution of Social Work as an Academic Discipline**

Modern social work evolved in the nineteenth century to address the problems created by the emergence of the industrial society (Friedlander, 1967; 3). While it is true that all religious traditions had a history of individuals and institutions helping the lesser fortunate, it is only in the modern society that ‘helping’ became a profession and professional social work emerged. Professionalizing of the helping profession was both a consequence of change and a cause of social change.

The major changes that influenced the emergence of social work in the West were social, political and economic. The industrial society gave birth to a number of problems not seen earlier. Urbanization, and large scale migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment were some of the important consequences. Rural communities declined and so did the traditional forms of social control. People in the city often suffered from moral and material problems. Institutions like the family and churches which were earlier responsible for the welfare could no longer cope with the social problems. Modern social work had its roots when volunteers, mainly middle class white women worked among the poor and the destitute to alleviate their social and financial problems. However there was a growing realization that charity needs to be organized to reduce costs and made more humanitarian (Desai, 2002). The Charity Organization Societies (COS) and settlement house were the pioneering efforts in this direction. The COS was founded in 1869 in UK and in 1877 in the USA. The COS used a number of ‘visitors’ to
investigate the clients who were considered needy by the voluntary agencies. This system introduced some form of order in the then prevalent chaotic situation in dispensing aid to the poor. Secondly the issue of treatment was introduced as the COS did not simply distribute aid but also provided social and psychological support. Therefore the COS visitors can be called as forerunners of the method –case work. Thirdly the formation of specialized agencies for coordinating and administering welfare services were widely used. The beginning of using a systematic method to deal with the poor can be traced to these movements. The settlement houses were started in 1889 in the USA. Settlement houses were agencies in which university students stayed with the poor to support them and at the same time learn about their life. The methods used by these houses can be termed as three Rs-residence, reform and research. Living with those who needed help reduced the distance between the client and the practioner. The COS’s major objective was to reform the poor by counseling and support while the settlement house aimed at understanding the poor and trying to address the conditions that caused poverty.

Another major influence was the growing social movements which took place during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Labour movements, socialistic movements, women’s movements and movements for racial justice were some of the most prominent of them. There was growing recognition of the rights for physically and mentally disabled, children, refugees and the homeless. Several social workers gave lead to these movements or were very much influenced by them. For example, Jane Addams who started the settlement houses in Chicago won a Nobel Prize for her contribution to the peace movements. Social workers were in the forefront of the efforts to pass legislations to protect the rights of the disabled, minorities and women.
Another important factor in the emergence of professional social work was the growing role of the state in welfare programmes. The Social Security Act 1935 gave the responsibility of providing financial support to the vulnerable sections to the government. The welfare component in the government increased in most of the European countries. Professional social workers planned and implemented the welfare programmes giving the profession greater visibility and legitimacy.

Social’s increasing role in the society made it imperative that a formal system of education be created that would train social workers to perform their functions effectively. The first university to introduce formal education was Columbia University which offered a six-week training programme in 1896 for the volunteers who were working in the welfare sector. Gradually there were number of courses which were offered increased. The duration was also increased as subjects of study increased. Newcomer (1959) cites three developments that took place which facilitated the rise of social work education in USA (i) the development of social sciences as academic disciplines (ii) the establishment of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections and (iii) the establishment of privately sponsored women’s colleges and co-educational public universities (cited by Desai, 2002). By the early twentieth century social work courses became part of university system in the USA. However the content and duration of the social work courses were the subject of debate. In 1932 the Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) adopted a minimum one year curriculum that included prescribed courses of subject areas such as medical and psychiatric information research, social legislation and legal aspects of social work (Dnnear 1984 quoted in Reamer). In 1944 the AASSW identified eight areas which should be taught in social work courses such as, public welfare, social case work, group work, community organization, medical
Social Work and Its Relationship to other Disciplines

information, social research, psychiatry and social welfare administration. The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) was started in 1952 to regulate social work education. In 1962 it formulated the first formal curriculum policy which divided the curriculum into three areas like social welfare policy and services, human behaviour and the social environment and methods of social work practice. The next review in 1982 clarified the important role of liberal arts in the syllabus and identified five important areas: human behaviour and social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research and field practicum. Again in 1992, some new areas of concern were stressed including values and ethics, cultural and ethnic diversity, population at risk, human behaviour and social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research and field practicum. Presently there is a broad consensus in the US on the topics that need to be part of formal training in social work. (Reamer in Reamer, 1993, 1-12).

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) World census of Social work education 1998-1999 has given a global picture (Not including us) of the topic of study in social work courses. four courses namely research, social policy, personal and interpersonal intervention and community intervention were offered by 68.7% of the schools and Social and Public Administration; Social History and Philosophy; Ethnic and Cultural Focus; Bio\Psycho\Social Theory; and Organizational Theory were offered by 50% to 54% of all schools out side the US. Social work curriculum represents the knowledge that has to be transfer to new entrants to the profession and maintains the standards of services. The existing curriculum can be divided into four components: (1) Human behaviour and social environment which will include the theories that explain social reality. This section of social work knowledge relies more on social science disciplines like sociology,
psychology, history and economic, (2) Social policy, social welfare policy and social welfare administration. This section enriches itself from the policy sciences and public administration, (3) Social work practice. This section depends largely on the methods of social work namely case work, group work and community organization. Within these models, social work has evolved many intervention methods like task centered ecology model, (4) Social work research which centers around evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of the various means of intervention unlike the social sciences research which aims at dispassionate search for truth.

Along with the gradual recognition of social work as a discipline, there has been an increase in the number of books and articles related to its practice. Mary Richmond wrote ‘social diagnosis’ which described methods to understand and diagnose social reality. It influenced social work practice as it was among the first text to systematically describe the methods for practice. Similarly contributions by Grace Coyle, Mary Follet and others helped the growth of group work knowledge.

**Social Work and its Relation to Other Disciplines**

Social work is related to various disciplines. The areas like sociology, psychology and social policy are considered cognate disciplines of social work which has influenced social work. (Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, 1976 quoted in Dominelli, 1997)

**Sociology and Social Work**

Sociology (Latin “socius” meaning companion and Greek logos the study) is the scientific study of the human society. It is called the science of society. All social sciences study human behaviour, but the content, approach and the
context of sociology are very different from other disciplines. According to Inkeles (1999; 14-15) sociology has three distinctive subject matters. Firstly, sociology is the study of society with society as the unit of analysis. Here it studies the internal differentiations and how they interact with each other and how they influence each other. It studies the allocation of functions to the different structures of the society. Max Weber, for example, studied the relationship between religion and capitalism and how the later helped capitalism emerge. Sociology also studies the external characteristics of the population and the rate and stage of its progress. The problems of the society are explained using these factors. Secondly sociology as the study of intuitions – political, economic, social, legal, stratifications, etc. It studies the features that these institutions share and the features that are different. Their degree of specialization and level of autonomy are also studied. Durkheim, one of the pioneers of sociology, called sociology as the study of social institution. Thirdly sociology is the study of social relationships. By social relationship we mean the interactions between individuals. Interactions between individuals are mediated by norms and values of the society and are intended to achieve goals.

The subject matter for sociology was collective behaviour of human beings. Society, community, family, religion, nation and groups are concepts that sociology investigates and studies. Its methods are considerably influenced by natural sciences. Even more importantly sociology studied the European society that was polarized and divided on ideological lines. The society was in danger of being disintegrated. Sociologists through their theoretical contributions were responding to this major crisis that they saw around them. They were suggesting the ways and means that societies could adopt to face the problems caused by modernity.
Professional social work and sociology emerged in the European society in the nineteenth century which was the period of great changes in the society. Both responded to the crises caused by the changes in the modern society. They used the scientific methods to validate their means of work, gain acceptance and popular support. There were hard fought ideological debates within the adherents of each discipline so as to the best way to solve problems. For example in social work the COS approach and the settlement approach influenced the direction of social work. The COS favoured the person centered approach which depended on case work to resolve social problem while the settlement house favoured a structural change to resolve the problem. In different forms the debate continues so as to find the best way to resolve social problems. (Dominelli, 2004; 47)

But sociology and social work differ in many aspects. In Sociology the approach to society is theoretical and theory building is its major concern. Social work on the other hand has to be practical and deal with problems. So social workers spend more time in the field with people rather than in the libraries with books. Sociological theory is based on facts drawn from complex social reality. They offer precise cause to explain social phenomena. Often these theories are of little value to the practioner as many other factors come into play which should be taken into account to reach a realistic solution. On the other hand, sociologist find social workers work to be fragmented and oriented only towards the problem at hand. Another important distinction between social work and sociology is that the latter made claims to be a value free discipline. Being objective and free from bias was considered a virtue. Social work on the other hand is a value based profession based on humanitarian principles. (Johnson, 1998; 14)

Sociology has a significant influence on social work. The work of Charles Booth on poverty gave new perspectives
Social Work and Its Relationship to other Disciplines

to the society. Sociological analysis provides theoretical perspectives that can subject policies and the work which practitioners do to systematic analysis thereby enhancing our understanding of what is done and why (Dominelli, 1997;5). The following are the areas in which contribution of Sociology is significant.

1) The systems theory in sociology has been used in the ecological model of social intervention in which the client systems are seen as being part of the environment and being influenced by it. (Germain, Carel in Reamer(ed), 1994: 103)

2) The major three approaches of sociology – structural functionalist, Marxian and interactionist – have influenced social work practice. Marxist theories have helped social worker understand that conflict is part of society and that different sections in society have conflicting interests. These perspectives have helped social workers look critically at its own methods and see whose interests the profession is serving. Further they have enabled social work professionals to influence social policy by advocating for legislations and programs. The integrationist school has contributed to the understanding of sub-cultures and delinquency. Some of the key theorists and their concepts that have been significantly used in social work include Foucault concept of power, Marx's class relationship, and Goff man’s closed institutions. (Dominelli, 1997; 82)

3) Sociological concepts like role, status, authority, power, rights, responsibility, groups, communities and nations are used in casework, group work and community organization which has enriched social work practice.

4) The study of family, types of families, changing roles of family members, changing functions of family and
its members, the problems and means to resolve these problems.

5) Problems of elderly and their solutions.

**Psychology and Social Work**

Psychology (Latin psyche soul and logos study) is the study of mental processes and human behaviour. Psychology can be defined as the science of human and animal behaviour; it includes application of this science to human problems (Morgan, C.T. et al, 1993; 30). Being a science it uses the tools of observation, measurement and classification to study human behaviour.

Three main approaches dominate the field of psychology

(1) Freudian and neo Freudian approaches. This approach gives importance to the unconscious part of the mind which plays an important role in determining the behaviour of the individual. Sigmund Freud is the main proponent of this approach but since then many others like Carl Jung have contributed to giving new direction to this approach.

(2) Behavioural approach which takes behaviour as being learnt. Skinner the proponent of this approach advocated the use of empirical methods to study human behaviour.

(3) The third approach is the gestalt approach which takes a holistic approach to the study of human behaviour.

Psychology is further divided into various specializations — clinical psychology, abnormal psychology, industrial psychology, counseling psychology, developmental psychology and sports psychology. While much of psychology is descriptive and analytical in nature. Psychology is also a practice profession. A variety of agencies employ psychologists for work related to recruitment, counseling and training. Clinical psychology provides diagnosis to mental disorders and prescribes therapies for their cure. The area of social worker and the clinical psychologist overlaps even in other areas like child development and there are common areas of concern also.
Often social work and psychology expand their respective spheres of influence.

Along with sociology, psychology had a major influence on the social work profession. The emergence of Freud’s psychoanalytical approach gave a major impetus to case work in the earlier part of the twentieth century due to the following reasons (1) Case work in its initial stages was a very general method which needed only common sense and logical thinking to practice. The psychoanalytical approach gave it an established (medical) base on which it could develop into a specialized method. (2) the need for knowledge to explain difficult phenomena with which practice was involved. (3) the entrance into the general culture of psychoanalytical ideas. (4) political and economic contexts that, time to time, emphasized individual culpability over social justice and societal responsibility. (Reamer 1983, quoted by Germain in Reamer, 1997) Social workers trained in this skill extended the clientele of social work profession from the poor to middle class and the rich classes. Social work profession’s total identification with poor, destitute and the disabled was reduced when clients from other section of the society started using their services. Most of these clients were well off and were part of the mainstream of the society. They mainly suffered from psychological ailments rather than from poverty. Thus social work came to be seen as a helping profession rather than solely caring for the poor. This new role of the social work was also better paying than those on other positions. Even now the categories of social work professionals who are the highest incomes are who offer individual and privatized care to their clients.

Psychology contributed a number of techniques to social work profession

1) Behaviour modification theories, psychoanalysis techniques like dream analysis, etc.
2) Child development with emphasis on role expectation at every stage.

3) Abnormal psychology and the various classification of mental illness.

4) Counselling psychology.

Social worker often used these techniques in their practice to increase their effectiveness. But social work engagement with psychology has its critics. The adoption of psychology methods removed social work from its original mission of helping the poor (Dominelli, 2002, Wootton, 1959; 271 quoted in Lymbery, 2005; 40). Further this view also influenced the way social work saw the problems of society. Seeing social problems as being created due to the individual’s incapacity diminished the part unjust social structures played in perpetuating injustices.

**Medicine and Social Work**

The social work had a strong presence in the health sector. Consequently knowledge about the various diseases, their causes, diagnosis and cure are necessary for the social worker. Social workers should be aware of the social implication of these illnesses. The impact on the family, the resources available to the client, governmental and non-governmental resources available to support the client are areas of concern for the social worker.

**Psychiatry and Social Work**

Psychiatry is the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. Psychiatric social workers are specially trained social workers skilled in interviewing, in assembling family histories of their clients and assessing social factors involved in psychological disorders. (Clifford. et al, 1999, G-18). Social work and psychiatry have close relation, as one very important area of intervention in social work is the mental health field. Social work gained a significant amount of information from psychiatry — types of mental
illness, their classification, causes, effects and treatment methods. They rely on the medical model, sometimes called disease model, which seeks to explain mental illness through organic and biomedical causes. (Golightly, 2004: 22) Consequently psychiatrists deal with the biological and medical aspects of mental illness. They diagnosis the illness and prescribe the necessary medication for the problem. Though the medical model is frequently used and accepted by the medical fraternity and the public at large its effectiveness has been contested. (ibid)

Social workers on the other hand deal with social aspects of the illness. They mobilize resources within the community to support the patient. It may be a job from the recovered person or getting funds for his livelihood. Social worker will also help his family cope with the difficult situation they find themselves in. Social worker views the mentally as a total person rather than a patient. The cooperation of social work, psychiatrist and other health professionals are needed for the holistic treatment of the patients. In USA the American Psychiatric Association, earlier known as Association of Superintends of American Institutions of the Insane, looks after the curative and rehabilitative needs of the mentally ill. There is no similar body in India as of now.

**History and Social Work**

In simple terms, history is the record of past events. However history has been able to discover underlying forces that have influenced those events. History is divided into the following specializations — political history, social history, and economic history, history of ideas and world history. The purpose of history is to know the past so that the present is better understood. If we want to know who we are we must know from where we came and how we reached here. So history studies the past events, the factors that influenced it and what circumstances brought about the events that happened.
For social work, history is important for the following reasons. First, the history of profession is to be studied so that the current status of the profession is known. New methods in historiography have enabled us to go beyond the approaches that have been seen earlier. This has allowed new light to be thrown on some of the problems that the profession is facing today. For example the feminist viewpoint of the history of social work, the alleged low status of social work profession lies in its origin itself. The pioneers in the profession were white women who were themselves marginalized by society which was transferred to their profession. Second, the role of social work especially in the west in linked to the fortunes of the welfare state. The welfare state is today facing unfrequented crises due to the rise of neo-liberalism which advocates a minimal state. To fight this political tendency social work has often used history to explain the growth of the welfare state and present problems it needs to address.

**Public Administration and Social Work**

According to Luther Gulick ‘public administration is that part of the science of administration which has to do with the government and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the government is done’. Public administration is also a discipline that studies the functioning of this part of the government. Public administration has many branches — administrative theory, financial administration, welfare administration, administrative law and personnel administration. Social work is concerned with welfare administration as it deals with the provision of social welfare services and correctional services.

The American Council of Social Work education has defined ‘administration as the process of transforming community resources into a programme of community service, in accordance with the goals, policies and standards which
have been agreed by those involved in the enterprise. It is creative in the sense that it structures roles and relationships in such a way as to alter and enhance the total product. It involves the problem solving process of study, diagnosis and treatment or action and evaluation of results.’

The scope of social welfare administration is (1) the analysis of social problem and determining the administrative response to the problem (2) the planning and execution of social services (3) organizing social security programmes (4) administering social welfare agencies (5) formulation of social policies.

The discipline of social welfare administration includes the study of organizational and administrative structure at the various levels — local, regional, state, national and international; the role of social welfare administration at different levels; Financial administration; Personnel administration; Public relations; administrative task like vision building, planning, coordinating, control, communication etc; research and evaluation. (Sachedeva, 2003; 97)

The role of the social worker in UK, USA and other western countries in the provision of welfare services of the government is significant. The social worker has to have the knowledge of the various services and resources provided by the government. She often has to decide who is eligible to obtain welfare services. In correctional services the social worker is often the probation officer who plays an important role in determining the fitness of the person to be considered for probation and parole. To perform these functions the social worker has to be familiar with the political and administrative context in which he performs the role. Also he needs to know the laws, rules and regulations, procedures which are associated with the process. The humanization of the social services was the
major aim of social work (Rogers and Stevenson, 1973,) of late the role of the social worker in policy formulation is gaining importance. Social workers are increasingly aware that participation in the formulation of policies is an important means to bring about social change in line with their values. Policy science is itself a multidisciplinary subject, which deals with how policies are made and how policy analysis can be done. The knowledge about both these aspects are important to the social worker. The need for participation in policy formulation has made knowledge about social policy important.

**Law and Social Work**

Social work and law have an important relationship. (1) In many countries especially in the West social work has been given statutory powers to intervene in selected areas of social life, for example the family to protect children or prevent domestic violence. (2) Due to scandals in the social services regulation through law has increased in these areas. (3) The limitations in law and the legal system has made it difficult for common people to get justice. Social workers have understood this chronic malady afflicting the legal system. Therefore law has an ever increasing importance in social work education as well as professional service.(Cull and Roche,2001; 12). Another important development that has made law important for social work is the emergence of human rights based practice. (Johns, Roberts, 2005; 20)

The need for knowledge of law is of paramount importance to the Indian social worker. Indian social legislations are often attempts to bridge the gulf between consensual values and their apparent incongruence with prevailing patterns of behaviour. It creates a legal framework for the new situations and provides opportunities for change in the desired direction. (Gangarade and Batra in Encyclopedia of Social Work in India, 1987; 72).
Social workers need the knowledge of law when they perform their roles as counselors. Secondly, social worker as mentioned earlier performs a number of quasi-judicial functions in the correctional field, childcare, adoption and mental health field. Thirdly, in developing countries like in India the social worker need the knowledge of law to protect the poor from the misuse of law by the powerful. PIL is a tool to ensure rights to those whose rights are violated.

Hence the social work has to get a basic understanding and knowledge of the following:

1) Constitution with special emphasis on rights and directive principle
2) Legal Aid
3) Legislations related to marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and succession
4) Special legislations to protect disadvantaged sections like Dowry Prohibition Act, People with disabilities Act, Prevention of atrocities of SC&ST, Juvenile Justice Act
5) Public Interest Litigation
6) Basic procedures related to arrest, bail, First Information Report, charge sheet etc.

**Philosophy, Ethics and Social Work**

Social work is a value-based profession that deals with the life of human beings. Hence its relationship with philosophy especially moral philosophy is very important. Moral philosophy also called ethics, aims at determining ‘what ought to be’ in any given situation. In simple words it helps in distinguishing right from wrong. The study of Ethics can be divided into three (i) Metaethics that deals with the ultimate questions of human life. What can be called good? What should be the basis of all decisions? (ii)
Normative ethics deals with how Meta ethics can be formed into principles that can govern the social life. (iii) Applied ethics is applying this knowledge to everyday life situation. Social workers work with human beings and with human relationships. Often social workers are confronted with decisions that have to be ethically sound. The end cannot justify the means. Ethics provides the basis for the right action towards the client. Large sections are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and value systems are constantly changing. Different perspectives and often contradicting are available on different issues. For example, on abortion there are number of perspectives and the question arises which is the correct approach.

Ethical problems and dilemmas in professional social worker exist in three forms (i) issues related to individual welfare and rights (ii) issues around public welfare (iii) Issues related to inequality and structural oppression. (Banks, 2001; 11-12).

Social work’s professional bodies formulate ethics for its members. It regulates the relationship between the professional and the client, professional and fellow professionals, professional and the society. (NASW Code of Ethics)

Social work will increasingly depend on philosophy and ethics to answer new questions and resolve dilemmas arising in the profession due to new issues like same sex marriage, euthanasia, cloning and stem cell use.

**Economics and Social Work**

Economic is the study of how the goods and services we want get produced and how they are distributed among the society. Economics has a number of branches—agricultural economics, development economics, financial economics; industrial economics etc. Economic policy is
how the system of production and distribution work better. No area of society is free from the influence of economic policy. Many issues related to social work like income, poverty, unemployment, migrations are directly related to the economic situation. Social worker has to understand the situation, has to adopt a through analysis of the situation which often includes the study of economic factors. Often individual and relationship problems have its root in the economic condition that in turn is created by factors beyond the control of people affected by it. For example, unemployment can increase tendency to divorce and depression

Amartya Sen’s concept of entitlements and Mahbub ul Haq’s Human Development Index (HDI) have given social work a sound basis for the provision of services to individuals. It has clear evidence that these measures are not only the rights of the people but has benefits for the whole society.

**Conclusion**

Social work is a practice profession. The first and foremost aim of the social work is to help the clients. The three factors that determine the quality of the professional service that the social worker provide are knowledge, skill and attitude. Knowledge means the capacity to understand, skill is the capacity to perform and attitude is characteristic response of the individual towards an issue. Knowledge is important as it improves the personal ability to comprehend and analyze while skill helps in the delivery of services. Other disciplines have contributed to the knowledge and skill of the social worker. The concepts, theories and ideologies have helped the social worker to go beyond the obvious and to establish cause and affect relationship.
As mentioned earlier social work often borrows from different disciplines from the wider society. However, this is inevitable, as social work can not remain indifferent to the increase in the knowledge base of various disciplines and has to respond to these developments. In fact social work knowledge comes from a wider range of sources which includes precedent, experience and common sense. However social work should and does adapt the various theories to its practice. (Younghusband, 1964; 124, Payne, 1997; 39). Often these theories lose their relation with the larger theoretical framework from which it had evolved which is not of great concern for the social worker. He often uses the most suitable means to achieve his objective. This eclecticism has contributed to the effectiveness of the methods.

The major methods of social work are its original tools for practice — case work, group work and community organization. Knowledge creation for the sake of knowledge is not the aim of social work. In any case there is a growing realization that single disciplinary approach is narrow and limiting. Theoretical subjects like sociology and history are adopting the multidisciplinary approach to studying their respective areas of study. It is not uncommon to find historian using the methods of sociology and vice versa. The interaction between political science and sociology has resulted in a growing area of study—political sociology. When the theoretical subjects are moving in this direction, social work need not be apologetic about amount their use of knowledge about other disciplines.

Alex Flexner in 1915 termed social work as not qualifying as a profession as it does not have a knowledge base of its own. But over the years social work has accumulated large amount of knowledge. However is has not been able to theorize these experience. Consequently, no universally accepted theories exist. Social work’s borrowing from other disciplines helps reduce this lacuna.
References

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Introduction
The knowledge about society and culture is very important to the social worker. Social workers practice their professions in specific social and cultural contexts which will definitely influence their mode of practice (Payne, 1997; 2004). They have to take into consideration the values, norms, beliefs, ideologies of the society before they create programs of action to ameliorate social problems and resolve conflicts.

Equally important is the necessity of the social worker to understand himself or herself. Social workers are themselves products of the societies that they live in and are inevitably influenced by it. Knowledge about society and culture is also needed to help the social worker gain self-awareness about him or herself. The personality of the social worker is a major tool used in practice and culture plays a major role in the development of the personality.

Society and culture are basic concepts used by sociologists to understand the social reality around us. Here we will discuss about these concepts from the viewpoint of the social work profession.

Society
Man is a social animal. He cannot live alone and needs to associate with other human beings for fulfilling his basic,
emotional and esteem needs. He forms network of relationships with other human beings for this purpose. The largest of these groups is the society.

Some definitions of society are given below:
Society is a system of usage’s and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many grouping and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever-changing complex we call society. It is the web of social relationships and it is always changing. (Mac Iver sand Page 1969, p. 5)

Society consists of the following components:
1) Roles and status
2) Groups
3) Community
4) Values and norms

Roles and Status
Society comprises of a number of individuals. Individuals have different positions assigned to them. The various positions in society that are allocated to different individuals are called status. Status can be divided into two types based on how they are assigned to the members of the society—Ascriptive status and Achieved status. Ascriptive statuses are those statuses that the person gets because of his or her birth into a particular family, caste, ethnic group, community or gender. Normally it cannot be changed and the particular status is assigned for life. Achieved statuses are those statuses that are obtained by his or her efforts e.g. a Engineer, a social worker or lawyer. The individual has to pass the requisite exams and tests to obtain these statuses. Achieved statuses can be changed as it depends on the individual’s efforts and good fortune. Most traditional societies have more ascriptive statues than achieved statues while modern societies have more achieved statuses than ascriptive statuses. One relevant
example is the mode of selection of leadership— in traditional societies the leader (king) was usually the son of the king, an ascriptive status, while in modern societies the leader (president or prime minister) is usually elected. In the traditional Indian society entry to prestigious professions depended whether an individual was born into a high caste family or not whereas in modern society entry into prestigious positions is through the merit of the individuals.

Every individual in society has more than one status in the society. For example, you are doing a course from this university and your status is that of a student. But you also have other statuses— you are also son/daughter of your parents; you are an employee if you are working in an organization; you are citizen of India; a member of your community etc. Some of these statuses are important to you as you consider them to be of value to you while others are of lesser or no value to you. The status that the individual considers most important and which substantially influences his / her behaviour is called master status. Other statuses, which he is assigned, are called secondary statuses.

Statuses and roles are directly related. Role can be defined as the set of behaviour, which is attached to a particular status. Every role has task role and maintenance function. The former is related to achieving the goals at hand and the later is related to maintaining bonds between individuals.

Each individual performs many roles attached to it. All roles that are attached to a particular individual is its role set. Robert K. Merton defines role-set as “complement of role relationships which persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status”.

An illustration will help you clarify these concepts. A boy has a status of a student. As a student he has to attend
classes, listen to his teacher's instructions, and do his assignments. But he also has secondary roles like being a friend, member of sports team etc. All these roles can be the role set the boy. Similarly, a teacher has a status of a woman along with other statuses of a wife, friend, daughter etc.

Roles are societal expectations from a particular status. Society demands that the required behaviour from every individual who occupies the particular position in society. The playing of these roles is relational i.e. role is performed in relation to other roles which are dependent in it. A teacher's role is performed in relation to the roles of the students. The doctor's performance of her role is in relation to that of the patient. Consequently the performance of role is mutually dependent and mutually influencing on both the persons who is playing the role and person to whom the role is played. They guide and control each other's behaviour. Thus the teacher who plays the role of the teacher is obliged to play the role of the teacher and the student is obliged to play the role of the students because the teacher is playing his role. The whole of society can be seen as different individuals playing different roles. It is only when the members of the society perform their roles satisfactorily that the society will survive and prosper. If the large members of the society do not perform the roles allocated to them satisfactorily the society will breakdown and can even disintegrate.

Society has to ensure that the individuals perform the different roles because only that can ensure the continuance of the society, the maintenance of law and order and peaceful existence of its members. The means by which the society tries to control individual behaviour is through sanctions. Sanctions has been defined as ‘a means of enforcing a rule or law and which can be positive or negative i.e. it may take the form of a reward and punishment’.
The different types of sanctions are as following (i) positive and negative (ii) formal and informal (iii) physical and psychological. Positive sanctions are rewards the person is given when he has performed his role to the expectations or even better than the expectations of the group. A student who gets first rank in the class is given a gold medal, which signifies appreciation, by the college. Negative sanctions are in form of punishments either by inflicting mental/physical injury or by withdrawing certain desired conditions. The police fine the motorist who violates the red-light signal. A thief is put in prison and his right to move freely in society is limited. Both involve unpleasant consequences for actions, which are unlawful according to the law. Formal sanctions are given by formal agencies that are set up under the legal system who implement a set of standardized and codified laws. For example, the police and courts are the formal agencies in India who are statutory empowered to punish the wrongdoers. Informal sanctions are general forms of social control and may include flattery, criticism, ridicule etc. Physical sanctions are those that influence the body while psychological sanctions are those that influence the mind. We will learn about these in the later chapter in the block.

Theoretically, roles in societies seem distinct and clear enough. However in real life there seems to be numerous problems. Let us see how these concepts can give us insight into human relationships and inter relationship problems.

**Role Conflict:** Role conflict can take place in two ways. (1) An individual has many statuses with different roles, which the individual cannot always harmoniously perform. This may be because in certain situations the individuals may not be able to perform two roles simultaneously. Different roles make irreconcilable demands on the person, which will lead to role conflict. For example, a working mother whose child is ill may not be able to decide whether
to take leave and avoid going to office or to neglect the child and go to office. Either way she will be not performing one role of her status as a mother or an employee has given her. (2) Role conflict can also occur when there is a difference in the interpretation of a particular role by different individuals including the role player. For e.g. A doctor gets a call from her hospital for an urgent case after her duty hours are over. She feels that she should leave her house and go and attend her patient whereas her husband may think that her primary duty is towards her family and she should not leave.

**Role Strain:** Role strain happens when the individual performing the specific role is unable to perform the role to his satisfaction or to the satisfaction of others or both. This can happen due to any of the following reasons (i) the person has not been socialized adequately to perform the role (ii) the roles on which this role is depended does not support the performance of the role (iii) the social situation does not permit the person to perform the role. The reasons thus can be psychological or social.

**Role Complementary:** When roles are complementary, partners in a relationship identify self and others correctly and accurately assume expected roles, and perform appropriately.

**Role Reciprocity:** Reciprocity involves the typical and expected pairing of role positions, such as husband/wife, mother/child, worker/client, teacher/student.

Indian society is experiencing a period of cultural change. We see a variety of value systems being adopted by different groups in the society. These values are derived from traditional ideologies to modern and even postmodern ideologies, conflict based on the value system in families, organization etc. Value consensus on important issues has not been achieved in Indian society. For example, many
women today work in demanding jobs that hinders their participation in household activities, which was traditionally their domain. So should the woman sacrifice her career for her household responsibilities or should she compromise her household responsibilities by focusing on her career? Many times she is expected to perform both the roles satisfactorily without any support and that leads to role conflicts and strain. Is divorce a matter of individual choice or does it signify social disorder? Another issue is that of the role of religion in public life. Can there be a show of religious symbols and discourses or should there be a complete separation of public life and religion? It is not as if conflicts regarding value systems is not present in other countries, but in India the intensity of the conflict is much higher due to the pluralistic nature of the society and changes the society is experiencing.

Due to these factors the Indian society is increasingly facing role conflicts at different levels including family, work place, political parties. Agencies meant for inculcating new values and resolving conflicts themselves suffer form crises of legitimacy and are unable to perform their roles satisfactorily.

**Groups**

Groups are important components of any society. It can be said that while men and women live in society, it is in groups that they really spend their lives. Society is abstract while group are tangible and real.

Groups are defined as in the following ways:

A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in more or less definite status and role relationship to one another and which posses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behaviour and individual members at least in masters of consequence to the group—Sheriff and Sheriff.
Groups are aggregates of categories of people who have a consciousness of relationship and of interaction—Horton and Hunt

According to the above mentioned definitions we can summarize by saying that groups are characterized by the following:

— Membership of more than two,
— Awareness of others,
— Interaction with each other
— At least some common goals,
— It exists of a certain length of time.

Groups are different from crowds and mobs. Crowds consist of individuals but there is no awareness about each other and no or limited interaction takes place between them. Mob on the other hand, is collection of people emotionally charged about an event. Once the emotion settles down the mob dissolves. There is no continuity in a mob that a group has.

**Types of Groups**

Groups can be divided into many types based on different criteria

i) **Primary and Secondary Groups**

Primary groups are those groups which are relatively small in size and whose members engage in regular face-to-face interaction, have shared interests and believe that the membership to this group is of very important to them. Rewards in primary groups is often not based on the contribution of the individual to the group but is based on the value attached to the member by the group. Examples of primary groups are family and friends. Charles Cooley was among the first sociologists to describe the importance of primary groups to the development of the human
personality. Primary groups play an important role in providing the individual with opportunities for intimate association and cooperation. It is through these experiences that the individual forms his social self; expresses his needs and desires in a socially acceptable manner; obtains cooperation from others and forms associations for achieving common goals; settles conflicts and develop social skills.

Secondary groups are larger groups whose size of membership does not allow for the growth of intimate and face-to-face relationships. Relations therefore become impersonal and relatively casual. They are contractual in nature rather than spontaneous as in primary groups. Cooperation between members is to achieve specific objectives. A hierarchy and a body of rules and regulations are often formulated to control the behavior of individual members. Rewards are based on the contribution of the member to the organization. Examples of secondary groups are modern organizations like schools, political parties and business firms.

The importance of secondary groups is growing in modern societies. Secondary groups have taken over the many functions of the primary groups like child rearing, education and production. This is mainly because of the growing specialized knowledge and skills needed to perform these functions. Secondary groups are also needed in furthering its member's professional and political interests. The Bar association, Medical Council and political parties are secondary groups formed to further the interests of their members.

Secondary groups being large bodies are unable to satisfy the emotional requirements of its members. Hence the members within secondary groups form smaller groups within them and fulfill their emotional needs. Smaller groups formed within the larger group and having only a
limited number of members are called subgroups. The growth of these groups have considerable influences in the functioning of the organizations negatively or positively.

ii) **Formal and Informal Groups**

Formal groups are those groups which are formed purposively for achieving specific objectives. Rules and regulations are rational and objective. In many formal organizations most of the members are full time paid staff. There is clear hierarchy and division of work. Members are obliged to follow the official channels of communication when they have to communicate to others inside and outside.

Informal groups on the other hand are formed based on mutual attraction and to fulfill needs. Objectives of the informal groups are diffused. Communication is again based on attraction and need not follow any rules and regulations. Members join in informal groups because they enjoy others company or to further their interests and not because they are paid a salary.

Formal groups and informal groups are mutually dependent. Often an organization begins as an informal organization and evolves into a formal organization when it grows and need to integrate specialists into it. On the other hand, every formal organization has a number of informal organizations. The existence of informal organizations has a significant influence on the working of the formal organizations. So every formal organization has to take into consideration the various informal organizations working inside it while making decisions.

iii) **In-group and Out-group**

W.G. Sumner has given this classification. According to him in-groups are those groups to which a person belongs to, like her family, friends groups and her colleagues. Out-groups are those groups that a person is not a member of.
Often an individual is deeply influenced by the ideas, values and norms of her in-group. She sees other groups having different ideas and values as being wrong or as not measuring up to her standards. It creates a feeling of ‘we’ and “they’ and us and them. While these feelings may create solidarity among the in-group, it may create conflicts between the various groups in society. We will discuss these issues in the subsection titled “culture” in this unit.

iv) **Other Classification of Groups**

Vertical groups and horizontal groups—Vertical groups are those groups whose members have members from different status groups while horizontal groups are groups that have members from similar status groups. Example of vertical group is a class of students along with its teacher whereas the example of horizontal group is a class without its teacher. The former has the teacher whose status is different from those of the students while the later has only students who have the same status.

Reference groups and membership groups—reference groups are those groups which an individual wants to gain membership while membership groups are those groups that an individual is already a member. Reference group often fixes the standards of behaviour for aspiring members which influence them and leads to anticipatory socialization. Example of reference group behaviour is MBA students wearing suit and tie to their classrooms as they are seeking to enter the corporate world in the future and the dress code observed there is suit with tie.

**Community**

Community is “social group with some degree of we feeling and living in a given area”. (Bogardus)

Community is the total organization of social life within a limited area. (Ogburn and Nimkoff)
A community is that collectivity the members of which share a common territorial area as their base of operation for daily activities—Talcott Parsons

Any group to be a community must have the following elements:

i) A collection of people

ii) A specific area

iii) Community Consciousness—the population must have the Feelings or Consciousness of Kind

iv) Common identity — the members should see themselves as belongings to the same group which is different from other groups

v) Relatively Common culture.

Community members due to these conditions develop a certain degree of interdependence among themselves. Some communities are very small having less than hundred members. For e.g. Tribal community in Andaman and Nicobar. Other Communities can be very large like nations and cities. In such kind of larger communities members cannot obviously know each other or have face-to-face interaction. But in their imagination they share the feelings of belongingness to the same community. (Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*). For example, Indians spontaneously identify with other Indians without actually knowing them. This feeling of commonness is developed by education, mass media, popular culture that allow shared memories and common sentiments to emerge.

**Types of Communities**

Urban, Rural and tribal Communities

The differences of urban, rural and tribal communities can be understood using the following criteria:
i) **Economic Activities**

Urban communities are dependent on secondary and tertiary occupations while rural and tribal communities are dependent on primary occupations. There does exist some tribals communities that are still in hunting and gathering stage but most of them now engage in agricultural activities.

Modern economies are increasingly based on secondary and tertiary sectors. Even in India the contribution of agriculture to the GDP is decreasing while the contribution of the secondary and more so the tertiary sectors are growing. However the population in the agricultural sector is not decreasing and therefore there exists large quantity of underemployment and disguised unemployment. Moreover large parts of the country are rain fed areas and failure of rains leads to drought. This in turn is pushing rural people to urban areas the result of which is uncontrolled urban growth.

ii) **Family Life**

It is generally believed that joint families are more prevalent in the rural areas and nuclear families are more prevalent in urban areas. The causes for it is identified as the lack of space in urban areas, frequent geographical mobility and the liberalized values prevalent in urban areas. Research shows a more complex picture. It shows that joint families exist in good numbers in urban areas also. Importantly it is not only the area which the family that seem to influence the type of family, it is also influenced by the main occupation of the family, caste and marriage customs. If the occupation of the family is traditionally business then it is more likely that the family will be joint family. Other sociologists have maintained that even when the family is nuclear there is ‘jointness’ in Indian family structure (should as extended family) than in the west. Important decisions are taken in consultation with the elders in the
family even though there exists a physical distance between the members of family. In tribal families both the family and wider kinship are more important than in urban and rural families.

iii) **Type of Social Relations**
Social relations in urban areas are characterized by (i) anonymity (ii) impersonal relations (iii) relatively less importance of the neighbourhood. Urban areas are characterized by large number of people who have different interests, engage in different occupations and are career oriented. They have no time or inclination to develop relations with people around them. Therefore it is observed that people in urban areas live lonely and atomistic lives. Some religious and political leaders have said that life in urban area is artificial.

But it not true that urban people do not have any social life. Many of them have social networks made up of like-minded individuals with whom relations are very close and personal. These individuals may not be neighbours but are as helpful and emotionally close. Hence while neighbours may be known urbanites they do have satisfying social relationships.

Sociologists also point out that anonymity is not always a negative feature. Anonymity can give the individual freedom and her private space. In India where exists a person of low caste who would be ill treated in the village as everyone will know his caste. But the anonymity of the city can give him freedom from stigma and oppression. He can chose to do any profession that he is competent. There is no restriction on food habits or to access public spaces. These advantages of urban life made Dr. Ambedkar encourage dalits to live in urban areas rather than in rural areas.
Other differences between urban area and rural area are as following: (i) Urban communities are more heterogeneous than rural communities (ii) There is greater tolerance of differences of lifestyles in urban areas than in rural areas (iii) social control in urban areas is more through formal means of control whereas in rural areas informal means of social control exists. (iv) the pace of change in urban areas is faster compared to in rural areas. People in rural areas tend to be more traditional than in urban areas. However these are only ideal types of urban and rural communities. The existing realities are more complex than the typologies seem to suggest. This is true especially in India where a modern society as in the West has not fully developed. Characteristics of rural culture are often found in the urban areas and vice versa. For example, joint family system and importance given to traditional religious practices are found in metropolitan cities in India also.

Sociologists have often criticized the use of the term ‘community’ as they believe that concept obfuscates many divisions present in the society. These divisions can be based on gender, caste, religion, race, ethnicity etc. It is pointed out by them that the terms community assumes that all members of the community share its common goals and will benefit equally from effort to improve it. In reality it is the elite who control the community resources and benefit from developmental programmes implemented for the community. The inability of women to participate and benefit from developmental programmes has been well documented. The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development Gujjit and Shah (Ed) This contention is true to a large extent taking our experience of Indian development programmes implemented by government is studied. Land reforms and community development programmes were implemented for the community as a whole but benefited the elite sections of the community.
Types of society
According to Anthony Giddens, societies can be divided into the following types:

(I) Pre-modern Society (II) Agrarian Society (III) Modern Society

I) Pre-modern Societies
There are three types of pre-modern societies.

i) Hunting and Gathering Societies
These are the most primitive types of societies. Members of these societies live by hunting animals and gathering vegetables and fruits. They are remnants of the earliest type of societies that existed. There is almost no organized process of agriculture— no plowing or sowing. Consequently, they can get only foodstuff for minimal existence. There is no significant surplus left. Inequalities are minimal and hierarchy is based on age and gender only.

Most of these societies have disappeared. Only around fifty such societies survive and they are also fast vanishing because their populations are being absorbed by the more advance societies or their birth rate is not enough to sustain their population. In India the jarawa tribe of Andaman Islands belongs to this category. Most of the tribes in India are in the more advanced stage of pastoral and agrarian societies.

ii) Pastoral Societies
Pastoral societies are characterized by the presence of a limited form of settled farming and the rearing of domestic animals for milk, meat, wool etc. but these societies still depend on the methods of hunting and gathering to a large extent.

Pastoral societies are found in a small number around the globe. In India certain communities can be classified as
pastoral societies— the Gujjar communities in Jammu & Kashmir.

iii) **Non-industrial Cities**
Apart from these pre-modern societies Giddens also notes that there were development of several cities in region around present day India, Egypt and Iran in around 6000 BC or so. These cities shared many characteristics of modern cities. Art and science was developed and there were centers of culture like theater. Commerce and administration were also developed which were the rationale for the growth of these cites.

These cities had high degree of social stratification. Slaves, plebeians, landowners, court officials were some of the important categories of the people living in these societies. The Mayan civilization of South America ancient Greece cities and Indian civilization are examples of these cities.

II) **Agrarian Societies**
The agrarian society is a completely settled society who has developed enough technology to sow crops and raise and reap them. The complete dependence on nature no longer exists though they are still dependent on rains for their agricultural activities.

Technologically these societies are more advanced compared to the earlier societies. There is widespread use of metal implements like wheel, plough, axe etc. In advanced agrarian society’s canals and bunds are built with considerable scientific acumen. They have also obtained the necessary knowledge to identify those factors that favour or hinder agriculture production. The society’s productive forces have increased and considerable surplus food is produced. The surplus distribution in the society causes social stratification— division of society based on income, prestige etc. Feudalism is the one important product of the agrarian society.
Giddens says that presently a number of societies are still agrarian in nature. Ninety percent of the population in Nepal and Rwanda still depend on agriculture and can be classified as agrarian societies. In India several regions are mainly depended on agriculture, as other sectors have not developed fully.

III) Modern Industrial Cities

The origin of the modern cities lies in the process of industrialization, which began in nineteenth century in Western Europe. This process itself is the consequence of the intellectual movement of Enlightenment, which saw the rise of science and of rational thinking. The application of these principles for use in production processes lead to the growth of productive capacity of society. Consequently, it brought about social changes leading to emergence of the modern industrial society:

Some of the major changes due to the emergence of the industrial system were the following.

i) Industrialism

Industrialism was the widespread use of technology to the manufacturing process which lead to mass production. Previously most articles were produced by hand and using simple tools the result was low productivity. The use of modern technology in the productive process made mass production possible. The role of capital and markets increased and transformed. Division of labour and specialization increased.

ii) Capitalism

The rise of industrialism gave rise to capitalism. Capitalism is characterized by the investing of capital in production process for profit making and wide spread use of wage labour. The increasing need for capital lead to the growth of a new class of entrepreneur called the capitalist.
iii) **Urbanism**
The growth of industries leads to the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment. The growth of large amalgamations leads to the growth of urban culture characterized by anonymity, tolerance of individual difference, etc.

iv) **Liberalism**
Liberalism is an ideology which emphasis on individual freedom and liberty. The rise of democracy, equality and rule of law are some of the ideas of liberalism.

**Postmodern society**
Sociologists have pointed out that the advance western societies have reached another stage of development that of postmodern societies. As the name suggests it means that the modern society characterized by the above-mentioned factors is rapidly vanishing leading to a new type of society. This society is characterized by the rise of information and communication technologies, domination of the services sector, biotechnology consumerism etc.

**Value and norms**
Values and norms are important part of the society that forms part of culture. in fact it is not possible to differentiate between society and culture. Values are generalized and desired standards of behaviour. A value is a belief that something is good and desirable (Haralamboss, 6). Norms are more specific in nature and involves a specific guide to action which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in specific situations. They are based on the values prevalent in the society. For example ‘human life is sacred’ is a value and ‘do not kill’ is a norm. The function of norms in the society is to (1) protect things that are crucial to the survival of the society like human life, property etc. (2) predict individual response in situations (3) to control deviance and (4) to maintain order in society.
Mores and folkways are two related concepts. Folkways, a term introduced by W.G. Sumner, refers to practices which over a lengthy period of time has become an integral part of the behaviour of the group. A standardized response emerges to a specific situation. For example if a person in the modern society is sick he is immediately taken to the doctor and in the traditional society he is taken to the witch doctor. When folkways become firmly integrated with the society and its observance is considered crucial to the existence of the society they are called mores. For example prohibition against taking drugs or committing incest is mores. Violators of mores are punished severely. A number of mores and norms have been converted into laws. Then it becomes a formal instrument of social control. Laws are enforced by the state and the state assumes the authority to force people to follow the law.

Socialization

Statues and roles are allocated to the members based on the culture of the society. The values of the society determine the criteria on which the statuses and roles are allocated to the members. The process by which the future members learn to become members of the society is called socialization. The young one of the human species is the most helpless of all animals. Young ones of a cow for example can start to walk within a day or two. Infants on the other hand need many years to be able to fend for itself. Apart from the biological reasons one important reason for the delay is the nature of human culture. Human culture is the more advanced and complicated than other animals. Take the example the process of communication. The nearest relative of the human beings is the monkey. Scientists have attempted in course of many experiments to train monkeys to speak. But they could not go beyond training them to make rudimentary sounds to convey basic needs and feelings. No amount of training could make the
monkeys go to a higher level. There was limit of the innate potentialities present in the monkey, which prevented it from developing its communication skills. On the other hand, the human baby only a few years old produce meaningful sounds to convey their thoughts, feelings and needs.

The socialization of the infant takes places through imitation and role taking. The infant is also self-centered and is unaware of feelings of others. Gradually it gains awareness and recognition of others around it. It also learns to communicate with others. It begins to interact with the people around it and the personality of the person evolves. Socialization as a process begins at birth and continues till death. Often de-socialization and re-socialization takes place. When a person is placed in a new situation she has to adjust to new demands made on her. She has to then get re-socialized. You may have experienced this situation when you went to a new school. The ways of doing things maybe different there which initially was uncomfortable but after some time you might have learned the new ways and gradually adjusted to your new school.

Socialization and the process of taking roles and playing their roles are closely related. An individual who has been socialized effectively will understand his role well and play it to his satisfaction. On the other hand an individual who has not been satisfactorily socialized will not be able to perform the roles satisfactorily. Many of them will be deviants. Deviants are individuals who are unable to follow the norms and values of the society.

**Agencies of socialization**

All institutions and organizations socialize individuals. However the main agencies of socializations are given below.
Family

It is a primary agency for socialization. Families in modern society have a major role in the development of the individual’s personality. The pre-modern society was the main agent of socialization as the other agents of socialization were not fully developed. But as process of differentiation lead to the growth of specialized agencies like school, mass media which lead to the family being divested of many of its responsibilities. However the family’s role in the emotional and social development of the child remains unchanged and therefore is crucial. Family is the only place where the individual is treated as a whole person and not simply as a worker or a student.

Family’s role in the development of the child personality is proved by a number of studies. Some of them have proved that the behavior of the parents influences the child. Children of divorced or separated families have a greater chance of divorcing themselves. Children of alcoholic fathers have greater tendency to get into trouble with authority figures such as teachers, policemen as they never had satisfactory relationships with the authority figures in their families. Similarly broken families have a co relation within incidence of mental illness, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse.

Peer group

Peer group refers to the same age closed knit group which individual belong to during the periods of adolescent and youth. The peer group often exercises a high influence on its members. It is most influential in the matters on fashion and fads, career choices etc. Often the norms and values of the peer groups conflict with those of the other socialization agencies like the school and college.

Juvenile delinquent behaviour is often caused by the peer pressure to gain acceptance in the peer group or prove to
the group that he or she can do risky tasks. Children who are caught by police for stealing or even murder reveal that they were forced to do these acts because their friends forced or persuaded them.

However peer group are important for the growth of the personality of the individual. It is in the peer group that he learns to adjust with others and fulfill his needs. Here unlike the home he is judged by his merits and has to perform to get the acceptance of his peers.

**Educational institutions**

Schools and later on the colleges are the first agencies where the socialization process begins. The school is different from the family in many ways. (i) it judges the person on her achievement rather than her birth (ii) it gives importance to the development of knowledge which enables the individual to gain professional expertise (iii) it introduces the individual to various social process competition, conflict, accommodation etc.

There are other agencies of socialization.

The **state** has become an important agency of socialization. The primary institutions of family and educational institutions are now days significantly influenced by the nation-state. Nationalism has become an important role in modern society. **Political party and political processes** are the most important agency for the political socialization of the individual. Most countries in world are democracies or claim to be democracies. Political parties and non political formations increase the awareness about political issues and common problems. The different ideologies attempt to persuade the member regarding the rightness and effectiveness of their solutions. **Mass media** has gained importance as a socializing agent because of its power to reach audiences as fast and in relatively cheap means. Audiences are exposed to lifestyles and value
systems which are at a distance from them. The power of advertisement, films and soap operas is significant. Role models from different societies are influencing the audiences. Religious institutions also are a significant agent of socializing in the form of values and principles.

Socialization is a continuous process and continues throughout the individual's life. Adult socialization takes place when adults learn new norms, values and roles in a changed situation. For example when they enter a profession or when they join a new organization. Resocialization is the process by which person sheds the earlier learning and adopts new behaviour patterns.

**Culture**

Culture comes from the Latin word *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning “to cultivate” Culture is often used word commonly referring to the level of sophistication a person has. A person who is rude and couth is supposed to have no culture and a person who posses the right behaviour and etiquette is said to have right culture. But sociologists and anthropologists have a distinct and separate meaning for culture. Some definitions are given below:

That part of the total repertoire of human action (and its products), which is socially as opposed to genetically transmitted. — Dictionary of Sociology, D. Mitchell (ed.)

Culture according to prominent anthropologist E. B. Taylor is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other habits quoted by man as a member of the society”.

Mac Iver and Page say that “culture is the realm of styles, of values of emotional attachments, of intellectual adventures.”
Dimensions of Culture

Culture has three dimensions (1) Normative dimensions which consist of values, norms, laws, folkways and mores. They give rules for appropriate behaviour like ‘do not steal’ (2) Material dimension that consists of using material objects like operating a machine and using the computer. (3) Cognitive dimension refers to how individuals process the information they obtain from the environment and interpret it. For example use of language and words.

Structure of Culture

Cultural practices are abstracts that are derived by observing the behaviour of the community. Cultural practices are organized at three levels— traits, patterns and complexes. They together form the totality of the particular culture. Every culture has a set of core values, which is abstract in form, but the practices of the community reveal values. These values form the unified core of the particular culture, which gives its members its philosophy of living.

Cultural Traits: The smallest unit of culture is called a cultural trait. For example, wearing a sindhoor for a Hindu married woman and touching of the feet of elders in North India are traits.

Cultural Complex: A set of traits related to a specific area is called a cultural complex. Marriage in Hindu society involves a number of traits all of which related to how the husband and wife should behave with each other. It can be called a cultural complex. They reflect what Hindu philosophy about marriage is.

Cultural Symbols: Every culture has certain signs and symbols which it endows with respect and honour. In itself these articles and signs may not be valuable but since the society has recognized it as being important all members treat it with respect. For example, the national anthem and national flag of the country.
**Cultural Areas:** The geographical area where the influence of culture is prevalent is called cultural area.

**Sub-Culture:** Culture which is found in various groups of the community which sufficiently distinct from the main culture. Sub cultures are part of the mainstream culture and shares certain common elements with the mainstream culture. However it also contains many important elements that are not part of the mainstream culture.

**Counter Culture:** Counter culture refers to sub-culture within the culture which advocate elements that are opposite of mainstream culture. For example the hippy culture which gained followings in the 1960s rejected the materialist culture of the west and opted for a ‘simpler life’. Counter culture thus positions itself in opposition to mainstream culture as it is seen as being defective.

**Material and Non-material Culture**
Many sociologists divide culture into material and non-material culture. Material culture refers to the technology, artifacts, objects, which the society uses in their everyday life. These are concrete and tangible. Non-material culture refers to the abstract and non-tangible items like values, folkways, norms, beliefs which influence the behaviour of the members of the society. Some sociologists’ disagree with the view that material objects can be classified as culture. They argue that one of the characteristics of culture is that it can be learned and there is no learning of an object. Only the use of the object can be learned. Secondly the meanings attached to the same object are different in different cultures. So the material object remains the same whereas the meanings differ (see Johnson, 1996). Other sociologists have tried to resolve the problem by terming the material culture as civilization and non material culture as culture.
Material culture and non-material culture constantly influence each other. Societies through the times are testimony to this relationship. Changes in the values have paved way for changes in the technology used in the society and changes in the technology have lead to changes in the value systems. Europe after the medieval age experienced an era called enlightenment which essential meant the rise of reason and rational thinking and its application in all spheres of human life. The main consequences was the rise of modern science, decline in influence of religion, secularization of the society and so on. The rise of modern science and its application gave rise to modern technology. Starting from the steam engine to more sophisticated uses the application of modern technology improve the productivity of the worker and enabled mass production. Industrialization, urbanization, class system, colonization are the major consequences of these developments.

We can see the numerous social changes due to inventions. The social consequences of a single invention that of a contraceptive—a device used to control the childbirth. A number of changes in familial and social life are observed due to the use of contraceptive. The contraceptive separated the sexual act from childbirth as couples could prevent childbirth by using it. An increase in premarital sex was possible as couples especially the woman did not have to bear the ignominy of being pregnant without marriage. The number of children in families has decreased and so on. Similarly changes can be traced to virtually every invention. Presently we see a number of changes due to the growth of communication technology. Mobile phones, emails, pagers have changed the way we communicate with each other, interact with other and network with each other. New forms of language have emerged due to the need to use shortened form of language for sending and receiving SMS. For example it is now
expectable to use the numerical 2 instead of to as in today and tomorrow. Some language purists have expressed horror at these new forms of writing, which brusquely disregards the basic rules of grammar and language itself. However these language purists forget that when the printing press was first introduced in India many scripts went radical changes to facilitate the printing the scripts. The printer could not in many cases print the earliest and the more complicated scripts, which were in use in those times.

That is not to say that all changes in material changes has lead to positive changes. Even some very beneficial objects have lead to negative consequences. For example take the evolution of the Internet. Some of the major advantages of the increased use of the Internet have been to make information accessible easily to all. Internet therefore is being called a democratiser and an equalizer as it enables information to be accessible to everyone regardless of their social backgrounds. It has reduced the power of cliques and information gatekeepers who used to restrict the flow of information to selected few. For example government departments can no longer keep hidden damaging information by citing non-availability. The emergence of e governance promises a quick and efficient administration. Secondly financial transactions have become easier and quicker On the other hand the rise of Internet in all these activities has lead to many problems not seen previously. The growth of pornography especially the more reprehensible variety of child pornography is one unhealthy consequence. The production and distribution have grown exponentially because of the facility provided by the Internet. Secondly new types of crime like identity theft and several types of banking frauds has been committed due to the growth of the internet. Government’s responses in form of laws and regulations have restricted the growth of the negative consequences but have not been able to eradicate these problems.
Material and non-material culture are mutually influencing each other. But due to the rapid nature of technology here exists a gap between material and non-material culture. The non-material especially technology has advanced but values and beliefs have not changed accordingly. This situation has been called cultural gap. Cultural gap is observed in many parts of world including India. Many Indians use high technology like sending satellites to space at the same time believe in horoscope, evil time, appropriate time and similar superstitions.

**Characteristics of Culture**

1) **Culture gives meaning to the social and material world around us**

Different cultures attach different meanings to same things as the collective experiences of the communities are different. For example the fish eating community in northern part of Canada has about 80 words to represent fish – baked fish, smoked fish, small fish, large fish and so on. Fish is an integral part of their lives and is frequently used for religious and ritualistic functions. Often the individual behaviour is compared to that of a particular fish. Like a person who is active is said to be like a very active variety of fish.

Culture gives meanings to the world as its values are integrated into the individual’s personality and she sees the world through the framework of her culture. Sometimes the identification of the individual with the culture is total and she is unable to understand the worth of other cultures.

When other cultures are judged by the standards of one’s own culture rather than by that cultures own standards, it is called **ethnocentrism**. On the other hand, when alien cultures are judged using its own standards, it called **cultural relativism**. However, it need not mean that one should justify every thing present in other cultures simply
because it is different culture. For example, reform is necessary in all cultures and should emerge from within the community.

2) **Culture is learned not inherited**

Culture is learned, means that the individual interaction with his environment gives him the knowledge about the culture. It is the experience of the person, which make him the member of the society with a particular culture.

Twins raised in different societies with different cultures follow different norms, values, etc. However to be a member of a society he has to be socialized in that particular culture.

If the particular culture or sub culture does not support the realization of the innate abilities of the individual then these abilities remain dormant in the individual. Hence it should be the aim of every society to provide through it socializing agencies the maximum opportunities to its members. In closed societies where there exist limitations on the opportunities available to certain sections of the society then the potentialities of people belonging to these sections will be limited. The traditional Indian society caste played a major role in limiting the opportunities to the lower caste. The new values propagated by the Indian constitution not only prohibits discrimination of lower castes, it also gives the government the responsibility and wide powers to ameliorate the situation.

3) **Culture is shared and not related to any single individual**

Culture is what almost all the members of the society share. Behaviour of individual can be influenced by culture but cannot be the individual culture. It is better to call individual actions as individual behaviour. Hence description, in common parlance that the individual has low culture is wrong. Another consequence of this is that individuals cannot make their own rules regarding their
cultures. For example the rules of a particular language is fixed and cannot be changed by an individual. I cannot say that when I say 'yes' I mean 'no' and vice versa.

There are always individuals and groups who may disagree with some of the values, norms, mores of the society and advocate and practice them. They can be called deviants. Merton has elaborated the concept of deviance which we can study here. Criminals are called deviants as they do not agree with the values. Often social reforms also belong to this category. Reformers often are the target of the people because they advocate values and practices contrary to the commonly accepted in the society. It is only when these ideas are finally accepted by society the rightness of the views of the reformers are appreciated. In India reformers like Rajaramohan Roy and Narayana Guru had to face stiff opposition to their efforts to eradication.

4) **Culture is never static and always changing sometimes slowly sometimes rapidly**

Culture develops from the collective experience of the people and these experiences are always changing from time to time and situation to situation. It is adaptive in nature as it mediates between human beings and their social and physical environment. The sources of change can be endogenous and exogenous; from within the cultures itself and from outside the culture i.e. from influences of cultures outside one own. Endogenous changes are innovations; social reforms while exogenous sources can be cultural interaction with alien cultures, invasions, and exposures through mass media. Globalization has increased the interactions between cultures.

5) **Various groups experience changes in culture differently and the consequences are also different**

Culture changes affect different groups differently. The factors that influence the capacity of the particular group
to adapt to the changing values are its position in the social structure, nature of leadership, its attachment to its traditional values and the strength of its institutions. When the British colonized India it was more than political and economic domination, it was primarily cultural. The British felt that they had a mission of civilizing people of ‘lower’ civilizations. All changes in technology, institutions, ideology and values, which occurred due to 150 years of British rule, can be called Westernization (Srinivas, 1972).

The influence of Westernization in the early stages was felt mainly in the urban areas and on the upper and middle castes. These were the sections that first took advantage of Westernization and the opportunities. Gradually the impact spread to other sections of society.

6) **Culture is source for integration and for conflict**

Culture integrates people as it allows for communication and expression of ideologies, emotions and feelings. Communication enables the members of the same group to share and express these experiences. This leads to the universalization of experiences. Consequently ‘we feeling’ develops in the group. Culture becomes an unifying factor.

However culture also divides. It leads to ethnocentrism and cultural chauvinism. While it unites peoples it also at times unites them against others. This leads to division of the population to insiders and outsiders. This division of the population is a major source of conflict in modern societies where people from different cultural groups cohabit close to each other. In India conflicts regarding language and religion can be seen as conflicts of culture. Some of the means by which Indian government manages these problems are:

i) Federalism. The division of India into different states many of which are created on linguistic basis. This resolved the demands of linguistic groups in many parts of the country for self-governance.
ii) The constitution gives equality before law and equality of opportunity to all people regardless of their caste, creed, religion, language, race etc.

iii) Common criminal code for all citizens but different personal laws for different religions.

iv) Special rights to minority for preserving their culture, establishing and managing their institutions.

v) Recognition of 18 regional languages as official languages while having Hindi as official language and English as link language.

Apart from these and other constitutional provision there exists many informal practices to give recognition to different linguistic groups. For example, attempt is made to include in the Union Cabinet at least one member from all states of India.

Indian experience to manage a multicultural society has had number of problems like language agitation, communal riots, nativist movements etc. However it cannot be said that cultural differences are alone responsible for these problems as there are also political, economic, and administrative factors that play an important role in creating and acerbating conflicts. But the Indian experience has been more successful compared to experiences in neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Srilanka.

Cultural conflicts are not restricted to the boundaries of nations, they are happening at a global level. It is predicted that future conflicts will be clash of civilizations which is clash of cultures(Huntington, 1996). According to him the Pre-Soviet era witnessed conflicts between ideologies (capitalism and communism) and between nation states. The present period will see conflicts between the major
civilizations which he labels as Western, Orthodox, Latino, Hindu, African, Sinic (Chinese) and East Asian. These conflicts are based on the differences in value system.

7) **Culture is deeply contested arena**

Culture is power as it enables the elite to control people’s behaviour. Culture which gives meaning to the environment and by controlling culture the population can be controlled. The elite in any group have the power to determine the essential elements of the particular culture. It determines what is right and what is wrong. For example, in Indian traditional society Brahminal values were prevalent which gave the highest ritual status to the Brahmins. They were superior to others and their occupation carried the highest status.

The high position given to the Brahmins was not left unchallenged even in the earlier times. Buddha challenged this system by introducing ideas of equality into the society which was characterized by a permanent hierarchical. Similarly the Bhakti movement was a reform movement that challenged the hierarchial and highly ritualistic Brahmin dominated society.

In the modern society culture has become an even more contested area. The rise in mass media has led to faster spread of messages across the globe. People are being exposed to other cultures and are willing to adopt their lifestyles, values and technologies. But the power to project ones culture to others is dependent on the technological and financial resources and as these resources are unevenly distributed the more advanced countries have more power to promote their culture. Another important factor is the relationship of culture with market. Lifestyles and values are promoted which will help sell products in the market place. The end result is the growth of a consumerist society promoted by modern culture.
Social Work, Society and Culture

Social work and society
Every society, community group, individual is unique and understanding the uniqueness is an important principle of social work. Social worker uses different methods based on her understanding of the environment in which the problem exists.

Conventional Social work
The most common methods used by social work are ecological model, person in situation, the problem solving model and life cycle model. These methods are to a large degree influenced by the systems theory of sociology. System theory regards society as a system consisting of interconnected and interrelated parts. The functioning or the dysfunction of every part affects the other parts. All parts must function properly and with a minimum degree of integration if the system has to function as a whole. Value consensus among the members is a prerequisite for the maintenance of the system. Problems arise when this value consensus is disturbed and the different parts do not function adequately. In layman language there is a mismatch between the various parts of the system. The part does not ‘fit’ within the larger system.

The central part of all social work practice with individual, groups, families or communities is assessment (Hartman; 28 in Reamer 1994). The aim of assessment is to identify the problem, gather information relevant to the situation and diagnosis the problem.

Assessment is done after getting information from all levels which the client system interact and is influenced. The information is obtained at the following levels.

Individual – role – issues related to role conflict, role strain,
Groups and families – issues related to roles conflict and role strain in members and group disorganization including lack of groups norms, leadership for the group as a whole

Community – issues related to lack of resources, oppression

This analysis would lead us to determine where the problems originate. It can be at the level of the role where role expectations of the person playing the role and the person interacting with her are different. The problem can originate in the the community level where large sections of the population do not adhere to the values consensus of the particular society for example many women disagree with the role given to them in the traditional community. In societies experiencing rapid change the chances for such conflicts over values are more.

Intervention strategy is decided after the diagnosis is made. The next step is to formulate an intervention plan that will include environmental change or adjustment by the client system. In most cases, it involves both the methods one leading to another.

**Radical Social Work**

Radical social work derives its inspiration from Marxism, Feminism, anti colonial and anti racist ideologies. The common features that unify these diverse ideologies are the following. Radical social work rejects the assumptions that underlie the systems theory. They reject that there is value consensus of any kind in the society. In fact the concept of society is myth as society is characterized by deep divisions between rich and poor, capitalist and workers, high caste and low caste and between women and men. The powerful dominates over the other and excludes the other from enjoying the desired things in life. There cannot be any common interests between the two opposing sections as the one thrives by exploiting the other.
Radical social workers especially the feminist social worker, see no difference between the public and the private. Therefore problems are not to divided into personal, family and societal. The division between private and public problems hides the exploitation which takes place in the so-called private sphere.

Radical social workers scorn at the methods used by the conventional social workers mentioned above. They do not see individual, family and community problem as a result of 'maladjustment', but as a result of an exploitative social structure. In fact these measures suggested by the conventional social workers would remove the focus from the real causes of the problem.

The central issue is power and in the capitalistic/patriarchal structure, power is distributed unevenly between different sections of the society which the powerful uses to exploit the others. Very often, the social structure functions in such a way that the oppressed sections do not even know that they are being exploited and awareness has to be created about the exploitative nature of the structure. As radical social work views problems as being created due to the exploitative social structure, their solution demands its replacement with a more just and humanitarian structure. Another target of radical social work has been the research and knowledge that social work produces. It is wrongly claimed to be neutral and scientific in nature but is actually based on the experiences of the dominant sections of the society. However its validity and its representations are considered universal. Knowledge is always partial to the interests that produces it and it can be used against the disadvantaged sections.

Radical social work has its adherents in practice and academic field. But there are critics of the radical social worker. (1) Social work is maintenance profession not
facilitating changing (Davis, 1981, 1985 in Dommenli). It feared that radical social work intends to produce revolutionaries rather than social workers. Considering that most of the jobs in the West are in the government sector, this move is likely to affect job prospects. (2) The emphasis on ideology will move students from the methods of social work which will result in disliking of social workers. However the emergence of radical social work has helped in refocusing on issues like poverty, social justice and racism.

Social Work and Culture
Social worker needs to be sensitive about the cultural context in which she is practicing. Though most social workers claim that they are sensitive to the values of the society often errors are committed. This is not unusual as we ourselves are products of our community and much of what we learnt there remains with us. Clyde Kluckholn has formed a value orientation theory that identifies five universals around which value orientations and values are organized. These include how they value time, activity, man’s relationship to man, man’s relationship to nature and nature’s relationship to man. (Pinderhughes in Reamer, 1994). The American is concerned about the future while Indians until recently are oriented towards the past. The differences in the perception of the client system can help the social worker understand the situation. For example, Pedersen provides some assumptions of a Western trained counselor. (1) All persons are judged using a normal hypothetical standard (2) Individualism is favoured more than collectivist interpretation (3) Autonomy is preferred over dependency (4) A person support system is not often considered necessary for analysis (5) The individual is expected to fit in the system. These assumptions of the counselor maybe true in the western context but will not work in other cultural context. Culture is a factor in group behaviour
also. In some groups it is not right to show one’s knowledge in front of others while in American society it is encouraged. Similarly in some traditional communities women do not speak if men are around. These behaviour patterns reveal cultural traits that are useful for the understanding of the social situation.

**Culture as a Tool for Oppression**

Marxists describe culture (including religion, education) as tool used by the capitalists to facilitate exploitation of the workers. Cultural values propagated by religion and education mislead the people from the objective condition of the exploitative system. For example religion promising a future heaven convinces the oppressed that the present day worries are transient and not worth to fighting against. Marx called this situation false conscious.

Antonio Gramci, an Italian Marxist concept of hegemony meaning the “dominate of one group over other”. He observed that oppressed population inspite of their great suffering do not protest against their oppression and fight against their oppressors. It is not only because they fear the coercive powers the oppressors have (the police, army or hired goons etc) but because (i) they are convinced that they is no alternative and the existing system is the best available (ii) it is not the right action to do because it goes against religion or against the country (iii) common sense says that it is better to endure than to resist. Gramci felt that for any radical action this war of position will have to be won. People should be convinced to fight the oppressive structure by creating awareness about their history and their role in the society. The awareness about their own history and culture allows the oppressed sections to assert their identity and value system which has been till then subordinated to that of the dominant section. This principle of cultural assertion has been used in social movement to fight for rights of minorities, races, women and dalits.
Culture of Poverty

Poverty is not simply caused by the lack of access to economic resources. Culture does play an important role in perpetuating poverty. Oscar Lewis, after studying the urban poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico, has developed the term ‘culture of poverty’. According to Lewis poor people have a different lifestyle from that of the rich. Their values and norms are different. This sub culture is learned, shared and transmitted behaviour of the group.

These value systems prevent the poor from escaping their cycle of poverty. At the individual level it manifest itself in a strong feeling of marginality, helplessness hopelessness, dependency, powerlessness and inferiority. At the family level it is seen in the high incidence of premarital relationship, divorce and separation. At the community level the poor participate inadequately in the major institutions like political parties. The culture of poverty is an adaptive mechanism that the poor develop due to their marginalization in the society.

The culture of poverty breeds poverty, which reinforces the culture and the cycle continues. Thus culture of poverty is an important factor in perpetuating poverty as it reinforces the attitudes that causes poverty. A visit to a slum in any city can validate these observations. We often find youths sitting idle and spending time playing cards or drinking alcohol. They do claim that they have no jobs and their failure to get one leaves them depressed that forces them to spend time destructively.

Conclusion

The present Chapter has divulged the meaning of society, incoming of culture, and relevance of both these concepts for social work practice. In fact, society and culture are part of the environment in which the social worker works. In case of conventional social work, social worker tries to
understand the uniqueness of each individual or group or community or society and their culture and thereby uses specific intervention method based on understanding of the environment in which the problem exists. The radical social work, derived from the Marxism, Feminism, anti-colonial and anti-racist ideologies, does not see individual, family and community problem as a result of ‘maladjustment’. It views problems as being created due to exploitative social structure and thus radical social work suggests solution through replacement with a more just and humanitarian social structure.

References
Indian Society: Composition, Classification and Stratification

*Joseph Varghese

Introduction

India as a country is unique in more than one way. It has a long history much of which is recorded and available. The diversity in terms of language, ethnicity, religions, food habits and innumerous cultural traits has confounded many an anthropologist Indians and foreigners.

A social worker in India has to keep in mind these factors while working in India. She/he has to be sensitive to the values of individual, groups, and communities. Without these sensitivities, she is likely to make mistakes, which will affect the relationship between her and the client groups. Many a time social workers with very honest and good intentions have intervened in the community aiming for its development with disastrous consequences for the social worker as well as the community. That happens when social worker is unable to understand the value orientations of the community. The chance for such disasters increases if the issue is sensitive and considered by people as private. For e.g., the controversial issue of AIDS and sex education for rural people.

One major reason for this misunderstanding is the lack of sensitiveness to the culture. A social worker is often ethnocentric— he thinks that his value orientation is superior to that of the client group. He tries to fit the

*Mr. Joseph Varghese, Christ College, Bangalore*
community into his frame works and labels them as ‘backward’ or primitive if they do not fulfill all the criteria of being developed or being modern. Then he proceeds to analyze the reasons for this ‘backwardness’ again using his value framework. Subsequently he plans a strategy for them to rescue then from their backwardness. Not surprisingly, these efforts fail and often the community rejects the social worker. The social worker is often bewildered at this reaction as he feels that he is only trying to help the community.

The experience of the developmental projects in the last fifty years has highlighted the need for understanding communities repeatedly. It is to help you understand the variety of people that inhabit this country that this Chapter is presented to you.

**People of India—Some Basic Facts**

India is the eighth largest country in terms of area and second largest in terms of population. The total area of India is 3,287,240 Sq km. It is divided into 28 states and 7 union territories. States are further divided for administrative purposes into districts and then into blocks and sub-districts. The total number of districts is 593 and that of sub district and CD blocks are 5,463 and 3,799 respectively. The number of urban agglomerations/ towns is 4,378 and of urban agglomerations is 384. India has 5,161 towns and 593, 731 inhabited villages. (Source http://censusindia.gov.in)

— According to the 2001 census the
— Population of India is 1,028,610,328
— Number of males is 532,156,772
— Number of females is 496,463,556

The sex ratio is the number of females per 1000 males in the population. The sex ratio of India is 933 which is
marginally higher than the figure given by the 1991 census of 923, is still low. Among the states Haryana has the lowest sex ratio of 861 while Kerala has the highest sex ratio of 1058. Delhi has sex ratio of 821. Low sex ratio shows the discrimination girl child in particular and women face in the society.

The population of India between the age group 0-6 year is 163, 819,614 persons of which 84,999,203 are males and 78, 820,411 are females. The sex ratio of this group is 927, which is also unfavorable to women. This also reveals that the situation will not improve in the short term.

Population density measures the number of persons per square kilometer. The average population density for the whole country is 325. But there are wide differences in the population density with certain parts like the Gangetic plains, the urban areas being densely and other areas being sparsely populated country. The state with the highest population density is west Bengal at 903 persons per square kilometer and the state with lowest population density is 13. Similarly at the district level North East Delhi district has 29, 498 persons per square kilometer and Lahul and Sipiti has only 2 persons per square kilometer.

Population estimates in the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>846.3</td>
<td>1012.4</td>
<td>1178.9</td>
<td>1263.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Urban rural population**

It has been long said that India lives in its villages. It is still true but development is bringing about a slow but definite increase in the urban population. The urban
population is 286,119,689 persons and the rural population is 742,490,639, which constitute 27.8 per cent and 72.2 per cent respectively of the total Indian population. The steady growth in the percentage of urban population can be seen from the Table given below.

**Table: Proportion of Urban Population & total Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>17.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>19.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>23.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>27.78*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* based on provisional figures of 2001 census  
(Source: Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007), Planning Commission, New Delhi)

Urban population will certainly grow as economic development increases. Consequently the resources of the urban areas are under severe strain. The growth of slums, water shortage and traffic jams are the major problems in the urban areas. Another major concern is that in India primary cause of urbanization is distress migration from rural areas rather than because of the demand for labour in industries and the service sectors. Hence the majority of the people migrating to cities is unskilled and has to perform low paying jobs and consequently are unable to afford quality housing, schooling for their children etc leading to urban squalor and decay. The percentage of slum population in the ten largest cities is given in Table.
Table: Percentage of slum population in largest million plus cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Million Plus Municipal Corporation</th>
<th>State/Union Territory*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Slum Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Slum Population to Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greater Mumbai</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>11,978,450</td>
<td>6,475,440</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>9,879,172</td>
<td>1,851,231</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>4,572,876</td>
<td>1,485,309</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>4,343,645</td>
<td>819,873</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>4,301,326</td>
<td>430,501</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>3,637,483</td>
<td>626,849</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ahmadabad</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>3,520,085</td>
<td>473,662</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>2,433,835</td>
<td>508,485</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kanpur</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>2,551,337</td>
<td>367,980</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>2,538,473</td>
<td>492,179</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population According to Age Group

Indian population growth is undergoing a period of transition. It is slowly moving from the stage of “high birth rate — high death rate” to the current intermediate transition stage of “high birth rate — low death rate” which leads to high rates of population growth, before graduating to levels of “low birth rate — low death rate”.

Therefore the percentage of population according to various age groups is not proportional. The population of India according to various age groups is given in Table.
## Table: Indian population according to the age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 years and below</td>
<td>163,819,614</td>
<td>84,999,203</td>
<td>78,820,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion to total population (%)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 14 years</td>
<td>199,791,198</td>
<td>104,488,119</td>
<td>95,303,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion to total population (%)</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 59 years</td>
<td>585,638,723</td>
<td>303,400,561</td>
<td>2,882,238,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion to total population (%)</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and above</td>
<td>76,622,321</td>
<td>37,768,327</td>
<td>38,853,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion to total population (%)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Not Stated</td>
<td>2,738,472</td>
<td>1,500,562</td>
<td>1,237,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion to total population (%)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 35% of the Indian population is below 14 years, which has implications for the present and the future. Some of the major implications are (1) There is a need for large investment in human resources to increase their capacity mainly by investing in education and health (2) create sufficient employment opportunities in modern economy. (3) Since such a large population will reach the reproductive age there will be no drastic reduction in the Indian population even if the birth rate is successfully controlled at 2.1 (target according to the population policy 2000; current whose needs have to be taken care. On the other hand, 7.5 per cent of the population that is 76,622,321 persons are people above 60 years and with the decline of joint family the responsibility of the government and the voluntary sector is increasing in this sector.
Literacy in India has grown from 16.67 per cent in 1951 to 65.38 per cent in 2001, which is certainly an achievement. But in comparison to developed countries that has achieved near complete literacy there needs much to be done. Areas of concern include the wide disparities in the literacy rates between regions, communities and gender. As the table indicates the total literacy rate is only 47 per cent and among women in Bihar is only 33 per cent compared to Kerala’s figures of 90 percent and 87.7 per cent. Similarly, the literacy rated among SC and ST’s is much lower than the general population. In 1991, the literacy among these sections were 37.4 per cent and 29.6 per cent respectively while the literacy rate for the general population was 52 per cent. Similarly an urban rural divide exists with 79.9 per cent of the Urban population being literate compared to only 58.8 per cent of the rural population.
Another problem is that 42 million children of the total of 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 in India do not attend schools. In 2001 the Central Government passed the 93rd amendment bill that made education compulsory to the children in the age group of 6-14, the situation has not improved to a great deal even after making schooling a constitutional right.

**Work Participation**

**Work Participation Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Workers</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>402,234,724</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>275,014,476</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Religion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Composition</th>
<th>Population *</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>827,578,868</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>138,188,240</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>24,080,016</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>19,215,730</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>7,955,207</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>4,225,053</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religions &amp; Persuasions</td>
<td>6,639,626</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>727,588</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Total ***</td>
<td>1,028,610,328</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Census 2001

India is a Hindu majority country with 80.5 per cent of population seeing themselves as Hindus. Except in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab in all other states/union territories Hindus are in the
majority. Muslims are the majority community in Lakshadweep and Jammu & Kashmir. Assam (30.9%), West Bengal (25.2%), Kerala (24.7%), Uttar Pradesh (18.5%) and Bihar (16.5%) have significant Muslim population. Christianity is majority religion in the Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya. Manipur has 34 per cent Christian but since these North eastern are low populated, the majority of the Christian population lives in peninsular India with states/UTs of Goa (26.7%), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (21.7%), Kerala (19.0%), and Arunachal Pradesh (18.7%) have considerable percentage of Christian population to the total population of the State/UT.

Sikhism is a majority religion of Punjab with 3/4th of the population being Sikhs. Other states/UTs like Chandigarh (16.1%), Haryana (5.5%), Delhi (4.0%), Uttaranchal (2.5%) and Jammu & Kashmir (2.0%) have significant Sikh population.

The largest concentration of Buddhism is in Maharashtra, where (73.4%) of the total Buddhists in India reside. Karnataka (3.9 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (3.0 lakh), West Bengal (2.4 lakh) and Madhya Pradesh (2.0 lakh) are other states having large Buddhist population. But in terms of percentage of total population the smaller states of Sikkim (28.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (13.0%) and Mizoram (7.9 %) have maximum percentage of Buddhist population.

Jains live mainly in Maharashtra (1.3%), Rajasthan (1.2%), Madhya Pradesh, Gujrat (1%), Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi (1.1%) where nearly 90 per cent of the total Jain population in the country live.

Religions in India are often seen as homogeneous community with clearly defined boundaries. But as already pointed out members of different religions share a number of cultural traits. At the same time there are considerable differences even within the religious community. Some of
the major sources of the differences within the communities are (1) caste—caste system originated in Hinduism, but is found today in every Indian religion. (2) Sects—every religion has sects. (3) Denomination (4) linguistic differences (5) regional differences showed in terms of lifestyles, practices etc.

According to the People of India Project, the Hindu community showed an extraordinary range of heterogeneity, genetically, morphological, linguistic and cultural. Hierarchy was an important value of the traditional Hindu social order. Among the 3539 communities studied, 21.6 per cent communities place themselves at high level, 46.7 per cent at the middle level and 31.1 percent at the low level. (People of India; introduction)

The Muslims community has two major sects – Shias and Sunnis. There are other smaller communities which are not accepted as Muslims. Hierarchy also exists in the groups. The Muslim community also has caste like divisions among it. Broadly these categories are ashrafs and non ashrafs which are largely endogamous. The ashrafs are divided into four groups called Sayyids, Sheikhs, Pathans and Mughals (Imitiaz Ahmad, endogamy and status mobility among Siddique Sheikhs of Allahabad in Gupta, 1996). POI study found that the Muslim community are heterogeneous and differ from on each other biological, linguistically and culturally. One important indicator is that while majority of the Muslims are Urdu speakers, forty seven percent of the Muslim population has returned regional languages as their mother tongue..

Similarly Christians are also heterogeneous and members are drawn from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Christians are divided into mainly three categories — Syrians Christians, Latin Christians and new Christians,
which also seems to have caste like characteristics. (Fuller, C.J., Kerala Christians and the Caste System). Many pre-conversion practices continue to exist. Hierarchy exists in Christians also with the Syrian Christians claiming superiority over others due to their high caste origins in the Hindu social order before their conversion to Christianity.

Sikhs are also heterogeneous in nature. Some of the groupings among the Sikhs are Jat Sikhs, Mazhabi Sikhs and the Ramgrihas. Hierarchy between groups is prevalent. Fifty-three communities perceive themselves to be superior, forty five percent communities consider themselves to be in the middle and the rest are considered to be in the low category.

Buddhists are also divided into categories. Neo Buddhists are a category within this community and mostly belong to the schedule caste communities. There is a significant number of adherents who belong to the Schedule tribes found in the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. The Jains are divided into two major sects—Digambars and Shvetambars.

**Schedule caste and Schedule tribe population**

The schedule castes are those castes that were considered untouchables and as being outside the caste system (chaturvarna system). Their position was lowest in the social order and they performed the menial tasks of the society. They performed most of the ritually ‘unclean’ occupations like sweeping, washing and leather making. Secondly, they also consumed ritually unclean food like pork and beef. Their unclean occupations and eating habits made them permanently polluted. Therefore the Hindu social order that was based on the pollution – purity principle considered these communities as the untouchables and unseeables. The higher castes (suvarnas) considered physical contact with them
polluting. If there was an accidental contact the high caste member has to undergo a cleansing process to get rid of the pollution.

**Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scheduled Castes</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166,635,700</td>
<td>84,326,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scheduled Castes**

| State with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes | Punjab (28.9%) |
| State with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes | Mizoram (0.03%) |
| UT with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes   | Chandigarh (17.5%) |
| UT with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes    | D & N Haveli (1.9%) |
| District with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes | Koch-Bihar (50.1%) |
| District with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes | Mizoram (0.01%) |

**Scheduled Tribes**

| State with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes | Mizoram (94.5%) |
| State with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes | Goa (0.04%) |
| UT with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes   | Lakshadweep (94.5%) |
| UT with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes    | A & N Islands (8.3%) |
| District with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes | Mizoram (98.1%) |
| District with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes | Uttar Pradesh (0.01%) |
### Number of disabled population and type of disability

Number of disabled population and type of disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disability</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>1,028,610,328</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total disabled population</td>
<td>21,906,769</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability rate (per lakh population)</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) In seeing</td>
<td>10,634,881</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) In speech</td>
<td>1,640,868</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) In hearing</td>
<td>1,261,722</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) In movement</td>
<td>6,105,477</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Mental</td>
<td>2,263,821</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Census of India 2001.

The number of disabled people in the country is around 2.1 million which amounts to 21 per cent of the population. Among the total disabled in the country, 12.6 million are males and 9.3 million are females. More disabled live in the rural areas.

### Language spoken in India

**Languages Spoken (Excluding J & K):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>337,272,114</td>
<td>40.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>69,595,738</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>66,017,615</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>62,481,681</td>
<td>7.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>53,006,368</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>43,406,932</td>
<td>5.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>40,673,814</td>
<td>4.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>32,753,676</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Speakers</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>30,377,176</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>28,061,313</td>
<td>3.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>23,378,744</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>13,079,696</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>2,122,848</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>2,076,645</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkani</td>
<td>1,760,607</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipuri</td>
<td>1,270,216</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>56,693</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>49,736</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Languages</td>
<td>31,142,376</td>
<td>3.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>838,583,988</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source of census 1991*

But these statistics do not give the complete picture of the linguistic situation of India. There are at least 325 languages which belong to the larger 12 different language families many of which had considerable number of speakers and their literature have been well developed. Secondly bilingualism existed in 65.51 percent of the communities. Thus linguistic differences remain a key characteristic of Indian society.

The nature of people of every nation is the result of their experience. The experience depends on the historical, geographical factors, socio-cultural factors. We will discuss some of the more important factors, which have influenced the people of India.

**Historical Factors**

There is evidence of very earlier human settlements in India. Evidence of the ‘upright’ man homo erectus is found in the Narmada valley which is being dated at least 200,000-500,000 years ago. Though there are claims about
several discoveries of human settlements in different periods the first widely accepted evidence is that of caved paintings of the Upper Paleolithic (10th to 8th millennia BC) found in rock shelters of Bhimbetka. Human remains of the period is found in the Sivaliks and Potawar also Romila Thapar has suggested the following periodization of history of India:

1) Hunter gathers, pastrolists and early farmers
2) First urbanization, Indus plain and north west India
3) Megalithic settlements of the peninsula
4) Chief ships and kingship 1200-600 BC
5) Second urbanization and state formation in the Ganges Plain 600-400BC
6) The Maurayan state c400-200 BC
7) The rise of the mercantile community and cross cultural contacts c.200BC-AD 300
8) The creation of Sanskritic cultures c. AD 300- 700
9) Distributive political economies and regional cultures c. AD 700-1300
10) The assertion of regional identities c. AD 1300-1550
11) The Mughal state and subsequent regional kingdoms c. AD 1550-1750
12) British colonial rule and Indian nationalist response 1750-1947

The long history of India has deeply influenced the formation of the Indian national character. Some of the important characteristics are discussed here.

Indian society is characterized by a high degree of diversity and plurality. Indians have very different value systems that guide their every day life. Invasions, migrations,
protest movements, conversions, caste system and the growth of sects within religions have contributed to this diversity. Many of the values and practices are distinctive of a particular community and the adherents often strongly identify with them. At the same time there is also a lot of borrowings/sharing between the communities. Many of these borrowings are conscious and at times they are unconscious. It is clear that there are number of linkages and similarities between different communities. The anthropological survey of India “People of India project” reports that people in different religious categories share a high percentage of traits. Hindu-Muslim (97.7%), Hindu Buddhists (91%), Hindu-Sikhs (88.99%), Hindu-Jain (77.46%), Muslim-Sikh (89.95), Muslim-Buddhist (91.18%) and Jain-Buddhist (81.34%). According to people of India report, some of the most commonly shared traits are monogamy, patrilocal residence, marriage by negotiation, community endogamy, succession by eldest son, participation in fairs and festivals and post delivery pollution.

Indians having lived in a multicultural society know how to deal with members of other community. Most of us are aware about the value system of people we deal with regularly. We know what food items are allowed and which food items are taboo.

**Social Stratification**

Human beings have always dreamt of a equal society where everyone will have equal accesses to resources, treated equally without any discrimination and so on. But this utopian ideal has never been translated into reality. Inequality has always existed between individuals, groups and communities. However in some societies the degree of inequality is more while in some the degree is less. Industrial societies are characterized by higher degree of inequality as the income of the richest is many times the
income of the lowly paid while pastoral societies the difference is relatively less. Some societies equality is part of the norm while in others inequality is the norm. The apartheid system in South Africa segregated the black and white populations with many privileges reserved for whites only. Some societies provide ample opportunities for its members to change their position in societies and encourage them to do so while other societies the opportunity for change is limited. Almost every society in the world claims that equality at least in theory is a desired value. Often, leaders deny that there is any form of discrimination prevalent in their societies. Even those societies where equality is denied for one section it is claimed that it is another form of equality that is prevalent in the society!

While social equality is omnipresent, social stratification is a particular kind of social inequality. The term stratification comes from the word ‘strata’, which is borrowed from geology. ‘Strata’ in geology refers to the different layers found in the inner part of the earth. It is observed the inside of the earth consists of layers each consisting of a different material. In the same way societies are divided into different layers according to the wealth, status and power possessed by the members. Thus social stratification can be defined as the presence of the social groups which are ranked one above the other, usually in terms of the amount of power, prestige and wealth their members possess (Haralamboss, 1981). Thus the criteria for the division of society are –

1) Class based division. It is based on the level of wealth and is therefore an economic criteria

2) Status based division. It is based on the prestige or honour attached to the person or group in the particular society. It is determined according to the value system of the society and therefore is part of culture
3) Power is the ability to influence others against their own will and is based on political, social and personal factors.

Stratified societies have a degree of permanency, as members do not move from one stratum to other very easily. Members of these groups share a common way of life, face the same kind of problems, have awareness about their positions, and therefore develop a common identity.

Societies are stratified according to categories. The US society for example, is divided according to the wealth possessed by the members. Thus at least four classes can be observed there— the rich, middle class and the working class and the poor. At the same time, the society is divided on the basis of race— the whites, Hispanics, Asians and the Afro Americans. It is more prestigious to belong to the white community than to the Afro American community and therefore a white man enjoys a higher status than an Afro American. Race and wealth are basis on which the American society is stratified. New forms of stratification which have emerged are ageism and sexism.

Wealth and status are the basis of stratification in Indian society and the class system and the caste system respectively emerge out of it. Let us discuss the caste system and class system in Indian society.

Caste system

Indian caste system is as a unique social institution. It traces its origins to the Varna system mentioned in the holy texts of the Hindus namely the Rg Vedas and later on the purushasuktas. Other sacred works like the Gita also mention about the Varna system. According to the purushuktas there exists four orders namely the brahamana, rajanya (Kshatriyas), vaishyas and the shudras who have emerged from the mouth, arms, thighs and the feet of the creator respectively. The first three Varnas are the twice born called suvarnas while the fourth
category are the shudras. However M. N. Srinivas points out this text based classification of society was not found even during the ancient period. In fact the Varna model has produced the distorted image of caste and prevented the proper understanding of the caste system as it exists in society.

**Features of the Caste System**

Caste system is a major institution in Indian society. Its influence has permeated almost all areas of social life. During the period immediately after Independence it was assumed that industrialization, democracy, education and social reform movements would replace caste system with modern values and structures. That has not happened and caste system has itself transformed itself and found for itself new functions in the society. Before we study the changes in the caste system and the society let us get to know about the various features of the caste system.

According to G. S. Ghurye caste system has the following features:

1) Hierarchy
2) Endogamy
3) Association with hereditary occupations
4) Restrictions on food and social intercourse
5) Distinction in customs, dress and speech
6) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges enjoyed by different sections of the society.

The Hindu society is divided into well-defined and recognizable segments, each of which has its own place in the social order. Membership to these castes is based on birth rather than on merit. Since membership is based on birth it cannot be changed. A person who is born to a particular caste cannot change his membership to another.
The various castes are arranged in a hierarchy – one above another from the top to the bottom of the social order. The principle for placing the various castes is the degree of ritual purity and impurity associated with the particular castes. A caste that is ritually the purest is found on the top of the hierarchy while the caste that is the most impure is found in the lowest position in the society. The castes in the higher position anxiously protect themselves from the various sources of impurity. The sources of impurity are human fluids, waste, animal carcass and some animals. Even an accidental contact with these substances will result in the person being polluted. The remedy to remove this pollution is to undergo a purification ceremony. On the other hand, the lower castes come into contact with these impure substances continuously which causes and reinforces their status as being ritually impure.

The hierarchy in reality is not very clearly defined. Only the ritual status of the Brahmin and the untouchables are relatively defined. The statuses of all other groups are not clear and there is a wide difference in perceptions on the ranking of other castes. Most castes rank themselves higher than what other ranks them which means that there is no universal agreement on the position of castes in the hierarchy. Even those castes that are ranked among the lowest would trace their origins to higher castes and claim that their lower status is due to treachery or betrayal by others. Hence any attempt to rank castes in a village is bound to fail due to lack of consensus. The 1901 census attempted to rank the various castes and was flooded with petitions demanding higher caste status for the various castes. The attempt was given up. Hierarchy in the castes is a sensitive issue and social workers should be sensitive about this. Often even refusing to a glass of water (either due to lack of thirst or concerns of hygiene) from the lower caste by the social worker can be seen as non acceptance of the lower caste and subsequently rejection of the social worker.
Endogamy that meant marrying members only of the same caste is another feature of the caste system. Castes are often divided into various sub castes that also seem to practice endogamy. In these cases marriage was restricted to members of the same sub caste. At times it was allowed that lower caste women would marry a man of the upper caste. The reverse was however strictly disallowed with the threat of severe punishments.

Specific castes are associated with specific occupations. So the members of the particular caste had to do the hereditary occupations. Except for certain exemptions like agriculture, trading, labouring and military service there was restrictions on the choice of occupation. Therefore an individual born in the cobbler community had to be a cobbler and an individual born in the community of temple priests had to become a priest. Certain occupations were considered polluting as the workers had to come in contact with impure objects like animal carcass, for example, the cobbler. Consequently these castes were considered polluting and placed low in the hierarchy.

Presently the relationship between the occupation and caste is further weakened. There are many instances of occupational change (PoI, 2003). Weavers and oil pressers have changed their occupation more than any body else. Many traditional occupations have been abandoned or been pursued as a subsidiary occupation. There is a large—scale diversification of occupation within the castes after the green revolution.

Restriction on food and social intercourse exists so that the impure castes do not transfer their pollution to the pure castes. There were strict rules governing the interactions between the pure and impure castes and even between the pure castes themselves. For example, in Kerala the Nair who was below him in the hierarchy could not touch the Nambudri who was the highest in the society.
He could approach the Nambudri and talk to him. The Tiyan belonging to the lowest rung of the society on the other hand had to keep a distance of 36 steps from the Nambudri. The untouchables were forbidden to enter Pune city during the mornings and evenings, as their shadows would pollute the higher castes.

The village structure reflected the hierarchal positions of the various castes. The upper castes and middle live in the main street and area around it while the lower caste have their area near the outside of the village. The untouchables often live outside the village and there were strict restrictions on the movement of the lower castes into the village.

Restrictions existed in the way the lower castes may dress, the type of footwear they can wear, the material they can use for their houses and articles they can carry. Often they were forbidden from wearing footwear and gold ornaments. Rules were enforced by severe punishments for the violators usually administered by the caste panchayats.

Caste System in Modern India
The caste system has certainly not disappeared from the Indian society but has experienced major changes. Some of the factors that have influenced the caste system are the following.

1) Social reform movements of nineteenth and early twentieth century

The colonization of India British and the severe criticism of Indian practices by the British forced many Indian thinkers to look at their social practices and customs critically. The caste system and treatment of women were important areas where reforms initiated. Reinterpretation of the religious texts, reformulation
of doctrines, and the fusing of western and Indian thought were some of the methods by which Indian reformers tried to bring about change in the society.

2) **Radical caste based movements**

   Jyothiba Phule's Satya Sodhak Samaj, Periyar's Dravida Kazhagam and Dr. Ambedkar's were examples of radical social movements which instead of trying at reforming the caste system aimed at destroying it. These movements related caste system to Hinduism and its sacred texts and called for radical change including the destruction of religion and rejection of religious texts.

3) **Westernization**

   Foreign invaders who came earlier merged with the population after a length of time. The colonial experience under the British was very different. Western ideologies and technology made profound impact on the Indian society. Democracy, equality, liberty, fraternity, nationalism, and individualism were some of the main ideas that influenced Indian society. These values were contradictory to the values of the caste system. The colonial government passed legislations that promote some of these values to a limited extent.

4) **Introduction of the democratic system**

   The introduction of the democratic system with universal franchise and one person – one vote brought about a degree of equality in the society, to a limited degree the lower castes were empowered and the traditional power structure in the rural areas was challenged. The changes are still continuing. In the first decades vertical mobilization took place which is increasingly being replaced by horizontal mobilization.
5) **Industrialization and urbanization**

Industrialization to a large extent broke the relation between caste and occupation. Industrialization lead to the increase in the demand for skilled labour and gave opportunities to all regardless of caste background. People of different castes worked together and it became difficult to segregate different caste members. Similarly, the anonymity of the urban areas prevented people from knowing the caste of each other and social interaction became free. However as Singer study in Chennai showed urbanization did not totally end the role of caste networks in recruitment of employees.

6) **Government policies and Laws**

The government formulated a number of policies to eradicate the negative elements of the caste system. Reservations, special programmes for SCs and OBCs, laws preventing caste discrimination, implementation of land reforms were some of the important measures which the government took to weaken caste system and bring about equality among the various groups. But government measures without changes in the public opinion regarding untouchability were not very effective.

7) **Conversion**

Conversion to religions other than Hinduism was an option for the lower castes. A significant section if not the majority of the members of the religions like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism are converts from the lower castes. At times, the threat of conversion was used by the lower castes to get concessions from the upper castes. The converts expect that conversion will change their primary identity of the untouchables to that of the converted
religion. However in reality their primary identity has remained.

8) Education
Firstly modern education is based on the values of equality and fraternity, which influenced the students to adopt these values. Secondly, education also gave an opportunity to the lower castes to get the knowledge and skills to move from their traditional occupation to new professions, which were not polluting.

8) Mass media
Newspapers, pamphlets, books and later on radio and television were means by which ideologies like nationalism and regionalism spread. But caste associations also use it to strengthen community feelings.

9) Politicization of caste
The introduction of competitive politics and mass participation gave opportunities to political party to use existing social institution to appeal to and mobilize people. It brought changes in the political system but it did cause many changes in the caste system.

10) Colonial policies and activities
The British society of during the eighteenth and nineteenth century was experiencing rapid changes with the rise of science and emergence of new disciplines claiming to be superior to traditional forms of knowledge. As a result of these developments and their success in colonizing much of the world, the British believed themselves to be a superior civilization which had the duty to civilize the uncivilized world. The framework through which the British studied Indian society and since the British had hegemony over the Indian society, their ideologies and knowledge
Basic Social Science Concepts

were increasingly internalized by the Indian elite. Consequently Indians started using the same categories and framework to understand their own societies. Census, anthropological works and popular fiction were some of the means by which colonial knowledge was disseminated, which subsequently brought about changes in the society.

Survival of Caste System in Modern India

The survival of the caste system into the twenty first century is a curious phenomenon for many sociologists and anthropologists. Caste system seems to stand as an anti thesis for everything, which the modern society stands for. The caste system survives because it acquired new functions for itself in the modern society. Major changes have taken place in the caste system (1) shedding the dysfunctional aspects of the caste system which are incompatible with the modern society due to social reform, legislation and sheer inability to practice caste values. Secularization of caste means that the ritual aspects of the caste system based on the purity –impurity principle has declined.(POI, Introduction, 2006). The explicit form of untouchability has reduced to a considerable degree. There are however incidents of differential treatment of schedule castes mainly in rural areas, separate tea cups, bar SC panchayat members to take office and restrictions on using common wells are some of the more common forms of discrimination. Serious incidents of caste related violence also take place. In general there is decline in the various disabilities associated with various castes. Social interaction between the various castes is free and without major restrictions. Commensality between castes also exists among most people. However caste retains its importance in the private sphere. Marriage takes place mostly between members of the same caste. But friends and colleagues are not from the same castes and are based on other factors like neighbourhood, professions and
common interests. In other situations caste based distinctions are not followed by its members in the cities but is strictly followed when they return to the villages. (2) Caste as tool for mobilization Castes have become social institutions through which political parties have begun to mobilize people. According to Rajni Kothari it is natural that caste is used to mobilize people as politics is a competitive enterprise and its purpose is to obtain power for the realization of certain goals system. So it is natural that caste, an existing social organization in the society, is used for mobilization and articulation of the popular demands. to seek to separate the politics and caste is unrealistic in the Indian society. Another important development is the mushrooming growth of caste associations. Though these associations are based on the primordial ties they often play the role of intermediaries between the state and the people. thus caste associations are not ‘backward’ insitutions restricting the emergence of modern Indian society. According to Rudolph and Rudolph caste associations contributes to change by providing an adaptive insitution in which tradition and modern social features can meet and fuse.

The politization of castes has brought about changes in the caste system. New caste alliances are being formed by castes who earlier did not belong to the same caste. Such federations of castes have in many cases enabled these castes to achieve their political goals.

**Indian Class System**

Social stratification based on the criteria of wealth is the class system. Industrialization made technology based mass production possible. In Europe, the estate system which prevalent in the medieval period gave way to the class system. However in India the caste system adapted itself to the modern society.
In India since caste loyalties has been strong and has been the basis for political action, class has had a secondary and less important role. However the existence of trade unions, peasant organizations and professional organizations show that class is an important factor and does influence the behaviour of the people. Upto an extent, class does become a basis for action. Trade unions and peasants organizations often bring affected people from different castes for collective action. The left parties and the extreme left have often attempted to create class-consciousness among the different castes and bring them together. However as the limited growth of the left movement shows these attempts have only been partly successful.

The rural class system described by Daniel Thorner

**Maliks**

The landowners whose income is derived from the property rights of their lands. They either lease it out or hire labour to do the work. Within this category there are various categories.
a) Big landlords who own large tracts of land, are absentee landlord and rent out their land to tenants. They are not directly involved in the management of the land and have no other interests other than collecting rent.

b) Rich landowners who also have considerable tracts of land that they often lease out or else cultivate themselves. They do not do fieldwork directly but are interested in improving the land.

**Kisans**

Kisans are below the maliks and have small to medium landholdings which are either legally owned by them or they have customary rights over them.

a) Small landowners own holding sufficient to support a family and cultivate the land using family labour. Outside labour is used during sowing and harvesting.

b) Substantial tenants are tenants hold secure tenancy with landholdings usually above the sufficiency levels.

**Mazdoors**

Mazdoors are those who earn their livelihoods primarily from selling their labour to the maliks.

a) Poor tenants having insecure tenancy rights and often face the prospect of eviction. Their returns barely cover their expenses for maintaining their household.

b) Sharecroppers are tenants at will with no secure tenancy rights who cultivate the land of others for part of the crop. They have at least the implements for working in the field.

c) Landless labourers are those who do not have land or any arrangements to get land. Often they do not possess any agricultural implements.
Classes that have a presence but not directly linked to the land include the petty bourgeois including the petty shopkeepers, traders and minor contractors whose numbers are increasing due to increased penetration of the market forces into the rural areas. Further governmental activities are also increasing giving rise to the contractors. Another significant class is that of the traditional occupation like weavers, cobbler, barbers and tailors.

This is a general picture of the class system of rural area which does not fully account for the significant regional differences found in different areas. In areas influenced by green revolution agriculture has become a capitalist enterprise which requires large scale investments and giving large returns. Marginal and small landowners are unable to invest large capitals and have no choice but to lease out their lands to the big farmers and working for them. Some economists like K.N. Raj have observed a gradually proletarization of the small and marginal farmers. On other hand there are areas where the small and marginal farmers lease in the land from the land-owners, cultivate the land and pay a rent to the owners. In many states tenancy is banned while in others it is regulated. However, tenancies to take place legally or illegally.

The class system in the urban areas is different from that of rural areas. But one significant factor in Indian urban areas is that it is not the demand for labour from industries that leads to urbanization but the distress situation in the rural areas. Therefore the migrants are not prepared socially or psychologically to adapt to the urban way of life and retain many of the characteristics of the rural areas. An important characteristic seems to be the caste system which does play significant role in getting jobs and houses and forming networks.
The main classes found in the urban India are (i) the upper class consisting of the big industrialists and traders (ii) middle class (iii) working class. However these classes, far from being homogeneous are highly differentiated.

The upper class consists mostly of the commercial and industrial classes. They own partly or completely the major industrial/ trading houses in the country. They form an important pressure group in the country and attempt to influence government policy in areas of operation. Federation of Indian commerce and Industry and Indian chambers of commerce are organizations that function as pressure groups. After liberalization policy the legitimacy and their support in the society has gone up. They generally want the government to allow free market forces to determine the direction of the economy. They want the government to enact new labour laws that allow hire and fire policy, improve the infrastructure and maintain a sound law and order system. However many of these older business houses have earlier benefited from the protected economy and grew precisely due to that situation.

A new set of capitalists has emerged in the sunrise sector of the economy-information technology, biotechnology and financial sector. These are knowledge-based industries and needed relatively less capital to start. They have greater legitimacy and visibility as many of the entrepreneurs are from middle class backgrounds and seen as having built up their firms through honesty and hard work. But here too government support in the initial years has played an important role.

**Middle Class**

The middle class is highly differentiated group. Most people see themselves as being part of the middle class. Some of the categories that are found in the middle class are (i) higher professional, administrative and managerial section.
This section forms the managerial elite of the society. While the ownership of the various trading and industrial houses rests with the owners, the management is often with the people belonging to this class which gives them importance and power. It also consists of the top professionals in their respective fields like the doctors, chartered accountants, lawyers, engineers, musicians. Often their incomes are higher than those of even the industrialists but since their income is derived from their professional knowledge rather than their ownership of factories they are placed in this class. (ii) lower professional, administrative and managerial section. The members of this section belong to the higher levels and they occupy middle level positions in the industries and the bureaucracy. Middle-sized traders can also be placed here. (iii) routine white collar and minor supervisory – they form part of the lower levels of the various organizations. Petty traders running their own shops can be said to be part of this section.

The number of persons in the middle class in the country is about 200-250 millions. However many of the working class, especially in the top two sections see themselves as middle class. The middle class in terms of numbers who subjectively identify themselves as middle class becomes a large class.

The role of the middle class in the society is very important as it performs the following functions (1) it acts as buffer between the rich and the poor and prevents the polarization of the society. (2) the middle class is the role model for the poor and the working class in terms of achievements and lifestyle (3) the middle class is huge market which is the basis for the economic growth (4) the middle class supplies the majority of the professional managers, bureaucrats and service personnel who manage most of the modern organizations in the private as well as in the public sector (5) the middle class is the target audience for the producers of cultural items like news, movie, dramas etc. However
the Indian middle class has also its limitations. The middle class comprises of members from the upper castes and the middle castes. The proportion of the lower castes and the even more the SCs and STs are very less. On the other hand the number of these sections among the agricultural labourers are very high. (2) the middle class in India is seen as illiberal and inclusive in nature. Unlike the middle class in developed countries who have an interest in the egalitarian society, the Indian middle class have authoritarian tendencies.

**Working Class**

The working class is also highly differentiated group. It consists of the following categories (i) Skilled manual working class. This section consists of workers who are trained for technical jobs. Electricians, auto mechanics, computer technicians and technical staff of industries belong to this category. They are in large demand in the cities and their income surpass that of the middle class in the lower rungs. (ii) semi skilled manual are skilled in semi technical jobs like masonry, carpentry, cooking and plumbers. (iii) Unskilled manual; they have no specific skills and perform general jobs like head load workers in construction sites, ports, railway stations etc., sweepers and cleaners.

**Doing Social Work in Pluralistic Society**

Pluralistic society poses a difficult challenge for social workers as they have to deal with people with different cultures and demands for services and programmes are made on the basis of caste membership. Caste and castes have become a great dilemma for the social work. We have seen that caste is not completely a reactionary and backward institution and that it serves important functions in the Indian society. At the same time caste has negative aspects also. People tend to associate with the members of their castes only. Often the social workers and social
activists try to mobilize people for common issues like poverty, land reforms, price rise, corruption, or bureaucratic indifference. To their frustration, they find that caste cleavages destroy their attempts to bring people into common platforms and all too often the people are more concerned with maintaining their caste affinities rather than deal with the common problems. The most serious consequence of caste loyalties is caste violence where caste becomes an instrument of legitimising violence against others. Often the administrative response is coloured by the caste loyalties of the policemen and the bureaucracy who neglect their duties to support their caste men. It is not uncommon to find allegations that policemen have not acted against the perpetrators of violence as they belong to the same caste.

Caste and class directly influence the development process. The development process is not a neutral process and affects different groups differently. The elite sections benefits from these programmes at the cost of the weaker sections. It is observed that developmental programmes right from the community development projects (1952) have benefited the elite sections—mostly belonging to the upper castes. How can social workers that are part of the development process ensure that the fruits of development are equitably distributed? Promotion of leadership from among the oppressed community, enabling their participation in the selection and implementation of programmes, creating people’s organizations and capacity building are some of the means by which social workers make development activity benefit all groups. However, inspite of all these efforts the caste system does complicate the development process.

In such situations, it becomes difficult for the social worker to decide whether to mobilize people based on their caste identities or whether to mobilize whole community? Should the social worker design programmes only for one
particular caste or should it be for the whole community? If mobilization is done on the basis of caste will it lead to strengthening of the caste system? Or is he responding to the social reality around him where different castes have different interests? Many activists believe that it is not possible to mobilize the community as a whole and only sections of the oppressed castes mobilized. Social workers are criticized for not taking up issues related to untouchability and casteism and focusing on soft issues like women, children, mentally challenged because of their own caste biases.

However its also alleged that all community based mobilizations whether at the level of nation, region or class has helped only the elite sections of the society. Social workers should approach these problems with lot of tact and understanding. The response of the organization and the social worker will largely depend on the ideology of the social worker, the past experience and the situational analysis of the community.

**Conclusion**

Indian society is one of the most diversified and complex one in the world. Here tradition and modernity not only co exist, but also transform each other and influence both modern institutions and values. There exists section of people and areas where standards of life meet that of the advanced countries while there also exists poverty and deprivation which are equal to the sub Saharan Africa. The differences socially economically and culturally which exists in the society, are too great to be bridged easily.

Social work practice here cannot therefore depend on the assumptions, tools and methods of the west. Social work profession in the west emerged due the changes brought about by the emergence of capitalism. Urbanization, destruction of the rural communities, rise of individualism
and emergence of the welfare state are some of its consequences. The situation in India is different, as we have seen. Therefore, social work practices have to be modified and in some cases re-conceptualized. This will need a constant interface between the theory and practice as relevant for the Indian society. The knowledge you have gained in this unit should help you understand the context of social work practice in India.

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Social Groups, Social Institutions and Social Control

*Joseph Varghese

Introduction

Society consists of numerous individuals who while sharing many things have different motivations and interests. How to balance self-interest of the individuals and the common interests of the society has intrigued many a social thinker from time immemorial. If individual interests are given primacy over the societal interests then there will be no harmony on how to work and live together. Anarchy will be the result. On the other hand, if society is privileged over the individual then individual liberty is sacrificed which can lead to dehumanization and rigidity in society. Every society has to balance between the interests of the individual interests and society. Groups, institutions, and agencies of social control are societal devices to achieve this balance.

However, these institutions are also the arena where the elite or the powerful achieve their self-interests at the cost of others. So as social workers while we do work with groups and institutions we should critically see who is benefiting through them and who is losing. Therefore, there are two major issues (1) how do groups, institutions and agencies of social control function and (2) how they influence individual behaviour. It is keeping these points in mind that we present this Chapter.

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Social Groups

Man is a social being, which means there are many psychological and social needs of the human being that only groups can satisfy. No man can live as an island and individuals forced to live alone develop problems. Groups are the most natural formations in the society. We live in groups. We work relax and fight through groups and in groups. When we go to a new place one of the foremost concerns is to search for a suitable group to join and become its member. It is not surprising since groups apart from giving material resources also give us a sense of identity and belongingness. Since groups play such an important role in our lives, we should know more about them. Social workers can use their knowledge about groups both in their work with clients and in their work with fellow professionals. Social workers often work with other professionals and her knowledge about groups will improve not only her performance and the group performance. Knowledge about groups is essential for group work, which is a primary method of social work.

Our knowledge about groups is enriched from many disciplines including sociology psychology, social psychology, anthropology, and organizational behavior. Before we move, further we offer a few popular definitions of groups.

A group may be thought of as a number of persons (two or more) who have some common objects of attention that are stimulating to each other who have common loyalty and participate in similar activities. — Bogardus

Groups are aggregates of categories of people who have a consciousness of membership and of interaction — Horton and Hunt

A group is a number of people in definable and persisting interaction directed towards common goals and using agreed upon means— Bennet and Tumin
Keeping in mind these definitions, we can say that the characteristics of groups are as following –

1) A collection of individuals
2) Commonly agreed goals and interests
3) Commonly agreed upon norms to regulate group and members’ behaviour
4) Common identity which differentiates the group members from others
5) Mutual awareness about each other and identification with other group members
6) Group as a unit influences and regulates member behaviour
7) Frequent meaningful interaction between group members
8) Physical closeness.

The above-mentioned characteristics are those of an ideal group. Existing groups in society may or may not have all characteristics. Even when they share these characteristics the degree to which they possess these characteristics will differ according to nature of groups and the situation that they exist. Some groups may consist of members who closely identify with each other and they support the group’s goals. On other hand there may be groups where members are emotionally distanced from each other and only vaguely acknowledge the groups goals.

Groups are different from other collectives like crowd, mob, community, and nation. A crowd does not have any mutual awareness about its members. For example, a crowd waiting for a bus in the bus stop is largely unaware of each other and is mostly preoccupied with their own thought. Secondly, the crowd exists until an event occurs and after that, it dissolves. Continuing with example, the crowd dissolves after the bus leaves. There is no quality of
permanence in a crowd. Mobs are emotionally charged collection of people focused on an event. They are either ecstatic or depressed about the event and often take extreme actions under the influence of these emotions. However, mobs are transient in nature and will dissolve after the event is over. Both crowd and mobs are ephemeral in nature and no long-term engagement between members is possible within them. Hence, while mob and crowd are collection of individuals they are not groups because they lack characteristics of groups like long-term involvement, mutual awareness and a sense of belongingness.

Community and nations share a few characteristics of groups. There are collections of individuals who exist for a lengthy period. They are aware of each other and there are norms to control the behavior of the members. ‘We feeling’ and ‘consciousness of the kind’ is found in its members. However, there is a major difference between nations and communities, and groups. Groups consist of small number and there is face-to-face relationship with each other. Nations and communities have too many members in them to have face-to-face relationship. These collectives are therefore termed imagined communities and relations are more in the mind rather in real life. However, nation and community are large groups called secondary groups. We will discuss secondary groups in the next section.

**Concepts related to groups**

Group dynamics is a term used first by Kurt Lewin which refers to all interactions of the members of the group from the initiation of the group to its termination. Group dynamics reveals the nature and potential of the group.

Group development is the various stages the group moves as it progresses from the beginning to the end. Tucker’s popular stages of group development is forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.
Types of group
We can classify groups into a number of types.

1) **Formal and informal groups**
Formal groups are those groups that are governed by rules and regulations that have been officially articulated and written down. They have clear objectives to achieve. Relations between members are for specific purposes. Membership to these groups requires the fulfillment of fixed criteria. On the other hand, informal groups do not have specific objectives and their goals are diffuse in nature. Membership is based on affective and biological basis. Interactions within the group are informal and personal. For example, your class is a formal group while your friends are an informal group.

2) **Real groups and virtual groups**
Real groups are groups that have face-to-face relationship in the real world. Virtual groups are groups that are found in the cyberspace and members are connected through the internet. Many of will never see each other face to face but relations develop online. Often close and intimate relations are impossible through on-line interaction. However, virtual groups can never substitute for real relationships, as there are limitations.

3) **Membership groups and reference groups**
Membership groups are those groups that individuals belong to at a given point of time. Reference groups are those groups that individuals aspire to join. For example, your membership group is the class, which you belong to while your reference group, is that of professional social workers.

4) **Open groups and closed groups**
Open groups are those groups for whom membership is open and without very many restrictions for aspiring
members to join. Closed groups are those that do not allow new members to join. For example, the Congress party is an open group whereas criminal gangs like the mafia are a closed group.

5) **Primary groups and secondary groups**

C. H. Cooley has given the concept of primary groups and secondary groups. He studied how groups influence personality of the individual. He differentiated groups into two types— primary groups and secondary groups. According to Cooley, primary groups are “...those characterized by intimate face-to face association and cooperation”. The main characteristics of primary groups are (i) face to face interaction (ii) small size restricted to around 20 members’ at the most (iii) frequent interaction between members (iv) continuous existence for a length of time (v) congruent objectives (vi) shared interests

Members meet each other often and interact often which results in development of a group personality, which becomes part of the member’s personality regulating and influencing it. Further, it is through the membership of these groups that the various psychosocial needs are met. Because of the number of functions it performs, primary groups are very important to the individual. Family, peer group, and gang are examples of primary groups.

Secondary groups are larger groups where the dominant mode of interaction is impersonal and formal. Secondary groups have increasingly become important in the modern age. Virtually all organizations of modern society like schools, industries, trade unions, cooperatives and political parties are secondary groups. Secondary groups are ideal for allocating responsibilities to various units, establishing a chain of command and communication and coordinating. Secondary groups in other words are useful in organizing work in the modern society. Secondly, they are useful for furthering similar but specific interest of the members.
For example, the professional body of social workers will help get recognition for its members.

Primary and secondary groups are not completely distinct groups. Many secondary groups started as primary groups of small number of individuals. Voluntary organizations often start as a small group before the need for division of labor, expertise and coordination transforms them into secondary groups. It is also observed that even within secondary groups, primary groups exist. Usually the highest decision making body in any organization is a smaller group—a governing body, council or a working committees. Therefore, a secondary group consists of many primary groups.

6) In groups and out groups
Sumner differentiated between in-groups and out groups. In-groups are those groups that an individual belongs to and feels his or her loyalty. On the other hand out groups are those groups that the individual does not belong to and therefore feels indifferent or hostile. In-groups helps the individual form his social identity and his perception about himself and the society. In-groups are often based on religious, ethnic, linguistic, regional, or any other ascribtive criteria. In-group is also based ideological or professional interests.

In-groups give the members a sense of identity and belongings. Often in-groups are sources of support for its members for moral and material resources. However, often in-groups also demarcate the boundaries of what the member considers his own and what is not his own. He may develop hostility for members who do not share his values. Conflicts may arise due to the division of the community based on in-group and out-group.

7) Major groups and marginal groups
Individuals in the society belong to many groups. They do not and cannot give equal importance to all groups. They
value the membership of some groups over other groups though they are members of both the groups. The groups whose membership the individual values is called major group and the group that the individual values less and is a nominal member is a marginal group. Individuals become members of any group when prestige is associated with its membership, his /her interests furthered, and his personal liking for the group members and group as a whole.

**Function of Groups**

Groups are the building blocks of organization, community, and society. We live our social lives through groups. We work through groups. We learn through groups. Groups are inseparable parts of the lives.

**Groups and Individual Personality**

Individual personality is the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment. The individual's heredity is genetically received from his/her parents and cannot be changed. His/her physical and social environment determines, which traits in personality will be, realized and which will be dormant. Thus the environment is an important factor in the development of an individual's personality. Social groups are important for an individual throughout his/her life. These groups include family and peer group.

C. H. Cooley calls these groups primary groups and describes them as having an irreplaceable role in an individual's life. Face-to-face association and cooperation characterize these groups. It does not mean that these groups are always characterized by love and harmony. Competition and self-assertion coexist with sympathy. But undoubtedly the we-feeling persuades members to sacrifice for the good of the group. For example a mother will do extra chores for the benefit of the family without calculating the costs and returns. The ability of primary groups to
Social Groups, Social Institutions and Social Control

persuade members to act beyond narrow self-interests is its greatest strength. Individuals are valued for their intrinsic worth rather than extrinsic benefit they can give. It is only in these groups that individuals are treated wholly and for what they are rather than what they do.

It is these groups that the individual is taught the basic rules of social behaviour. She is rewarded when her behaviour is appropriate and punished when her behaviour is inappropriate. She learns to control her energies and divert it to productive channels. Deviant behaviour is often the result of experiences in groups that encourage deviant behaviour.

Groups and Work Place

Large organizations are characteristic of the modern society. Tens of thousands of employees work in different places around the world for a single organization. However it is also true that while these employees work in large organizations they essentially work as a team i.e. as groups. The Board of directors in any firm, the largest decision-making body in the organization is a group and so are the various departments of the organization. Therefore, it is not surprising that an important element in the study of organizational behaviour is group behaviour and its effect on productivity.

Groups in the formal structure of the organizations are formed based on criteria of specializations, area, and convenience. While formal groups are important for the organization’s smooth functioning the existence of informal groups are also significant. The Hawthorne study done by Elton Mayo and his team proved that the informal groups have significant influence on the productivity of the workers. Through group pressure the informal groups regulated the output of the workers and the formal groups and the reward system had limited influence over the workers. Similarly, the quality of relationships between
the workers and the nature of leadership influences the mental well-being of the workers.

**Groups and Decision-making**

Groups have significant influence on the decision-making of individuals. Groups play a significant role in individual’s decision-making process. The studies done by Asch, Sherif, and Jennes showed that groups play a significant role in the individual’s perceptions. In all these experiments a significant percentage of the volunteers agreed to the choices made by other group members even though they felt that they were right. The following conclusions can be derived from the following experiments (1) the individual conforms to group pressure. (2) the standards by which the persons views a subject will be informed by the groups and he or she will orient the actions towards other group members (3) the need to demonstrate one’s skill to others is intense in most individuals.

**Groups and Education**

Education and groups have a significant relationship. Education is generally done in groups (class) not only because it saves time and resources but also it is recognized as the most effective way to teach and to learn. If students have assimilated and experienced a deeper level of learning, they have linked the new knowledge with existing knowledge they know and apply them to new situations. This is true of adult learners who already have a significant amount of knowledge and experiences which will surely influence their learning of new knowledge.

Educationists like John Dewey and Kurt Lewin and David Kolb studied the use of groups in education. Their central principle is that the personal experience plays a significant role in testing, validating and modifying of abstract concepts. In a typical learning experience a new concept is learnt and it is used to understand a phenomena and
feedback is received by the learner as to whether his application was proper or not. The process continues till the learner internalizes the knowledge and applies it satisfactorily. The quality of feedback in the process becomes crucial in the process. Learning in groups improves the quality of this process as experiences are shared and feedback obtained from diverse sources.

In distance education, learning in groups, becomes a specific problem as considerable distances separate the learners. Technology is used to bridge these distances. Internet is used to create a community of online learners who support and learn from each other. Virtual notice boards are created to communicate with each other. Virtual groups are important component of distance education, which to a large extent makes up for some of the limitations of distance education.

**Groups and Self Help Group**

Groups have an irreplaceable role in extending aid to others. It is even greater role in promoting self-help and mutual aid. When individuals come together they form a new entity, which is larger than anyone of them. Resources can be shared and emotional support is provided. Identification and universalization happens in groups. When one person has a serious problem he emotionally relieved to find that there are others who face a similar problem and that he is not alone in his sufferings. Further he can also learn how they overcame their problems and dealt with their grief, which will strengthen him also. These principles of self help are used in self help groups which are mushrooming all over the world.

**Social Institutions**

Social institutions in general parlance refer to buildings from which important offices function. However, in sociological terms, institutions have a very distinct
meaning—recognized ways of doing action. By this we mean, that all members in the society agree that there are certain specific ways in which we participate in the social life. For example, we agree how we choose our representatives to govern the country. It is through elections based on universal adult franchise. The designated office to conduct the elections is the election commission who can decide the dates of the elections, how candidates can file their nomination etc. laws passed by the parliament will govern who are eligible for the election and what should be their qualifications. The judiciary the watchdog of the laws of the land oversees this process. It punishes anybody violating the law. When a person loses the election, he has to vacate his position and the successful candidate will occupy the position and so on. The important issue is that every body involved in the process has a consensus on how to conduct an election. All these roles, networks, laws and norms make an institution.

There is similarity between the concept of role and institutions as both refer to a set of expected behaviour from individuals and groups in specific situations. However institutions are regarded as higher level than roles as institution will have plurality of roles within it. Institutions consist of a network of roles, structures and values.

Mac Iver defines institutions as “established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity”

An institution consists of a concept (idea, notion, doctrine or interest) and a structure—Sumner

An institution is a set or web of interrelated folkways mores and laws that enter in some function or functions—Green.

Every aspect of the social life has institutions governing human behaviour. The five major institutions are the
(1) Political institutions are institutions that regulate use of and access to power. Indian the political institutions will include the parliament, state assemblies, state and central governments, political parties, bureaucracy pressure groups and professional bodies etc. (2) Economical institutions serve to produce and distribute goods and services. Industries, markets, banks, brokers, agriculturalists and other are economic institutions. (3) Familial institutions are though that involve in marriage, reproduction and socialization of children. (4) Cultural institutions are concerned with religious, scientific, and artistic activities. (5) Stratification institutions determine the distribution of positions and resources. Caste system and the class system are institutions of Indian society.

Institutions are broadly classified into these types for analytical purposes. However, it is not possible to separate their functioning. Clearly, political institutions are influenced by the other institutions, and economic institutions by stratification institutions, and so on. The interrelated institutions together constitute the society.

The values and norms of an institution are not merely forced on to unwilling individuals rather the people have internalized these values, norms and laws in their personalities and they would not behave contrary to these values. Thus while there may be penalties attached to behaviour deviating from these social institutions it is not the main reason why people follow these institutions. Individuals are convinced that the behaviour expected of them is the appropriate response and that is best for them.

Take for example, the political institutions— some countries in the world, have elaborate constitutions written. Nevertheless, often there are coups by the army or by rebels who violate these laws. On the other hand, UK does not have any written constitutions, but the well-
established conventions exist to which everybody adheres. It is not the elaborative rules and laws that make institutions effective and ineffective but the degree of consensus that exist in society and to what extent these values have been internalized by the people and to what extent they adhere to these values.

Institutions gradually develop due to the common experience of the society. However the elite in the society will play a greater role in the creation and operation of these institutions. Institutions remain do not remain unchanged for long periods of time. Institution changes sometimes slowly and sometimes rapidly. For example in the Western society the institution of marriage has changed over the century. Marriage was considered as a sacrament and a duty with clear roles for husband and wife. Now marriage is secularized, democratized and its main aim is companionship. Divorce is also legitimate and accepted by society. In many cases, institutions simply adapt to the new situation that emerges in society. Caste system as institution is an example on how a traditional social institution having lost its traditional functions adapted to the modern society.

**Functions of Social Institutions**

1) Social institutions regulate individual behaviour. Individuals by nature have unlimited needs which is impossible to fulfill. Therefore society needs to control the needs of the individual, which is done by social institutions.

Social institutions channels human energies and creativity to social productive channels. Individual have lots of energy and creativity if left uncontrolled can lead to destructive tendencies. Religion, political institutions see that these energies are made useful to society.
2) Social institutions fulfill human need by Production and Distribution of Goods and Services. Economic institutions fulfill physiological needs and social institutions fulfill social needs and esteem. For example family fulfills the need for sex and parenthood.

3) A social institution makes individual behaviour predictable. In society there are innumerable social interactions taking place. Institutions reduce the uncertainty in these interaction and institutions help us predict the behaviour of others in these circumstances. For example, a couple going to marry will know their roles and responsibilities. They will know what to expect from others. Once behaviour is predictable other can orient their behaviour towards achieving the common goals. If they deviate they will have to suffer negative sanctions and face the consequences.

4) Social institution control and regulates deviant behaviour. Once it is recognized that a particular way of doings are to be followed that individuals who break this agreement will be punished which will restrain him from committing the error again and also be a deterrent to others from committing the same mistake.

Since social institutions perform crucial functions, their malfunctioning can result in breakdown in the society as a whole.

**Social Control**

Social control is the process by which society controls the individual behaviour and prevents deviance. The aim of social control is to maintain social order and social harmony.

Social control is the process by which, through the imposition of sanctions, deviant behaviour is counteracted
and social stability maintained. – Talcott Parsons.

Social control is exercised in two ways:

i) Extrinsic factors like police, courts etc.

ii) Intrinsic factors like beliefs, ideology, values etc.

Though it may seem that the extrinsic factors are more visible than the intrinsic factors it is the intrinsic factors that are the foundation for effective social control. The individual is convinced that the behaviour expected of him is just and legitimate, and acts accordingly. No amount of social control will be effective if large sections of people believe that the laws and norms are wrong and detrimental to their well being. In such cases severe action would have to be taken by the law-enforcing agency to maintain law an order. The other consequence will be the large gap between ideal culture and real culture.

Means of Social Control

There are informal and formal means of social control.

Formal means of social control are exercise by the state agencies like law enforcement agencies, armed forces, courts and all other agencies, which deal with enforcing the laws of the country. They are formal because these agencies are legitimized through a recognized process to act as an agency of social control. In modern democratic societies the representative institutions (parliament in India) pass the law and since there are popularly elected the laws are considered to be the will of the people. In traditional societies it was the religious ideology and the authority of the regent that legitimized these agencies.

Informal means of social control vary from customs, folkways to gossip, ridicule and disapproval. They are informal means as individuals use them and groups are part of the general public and have no special powers entrusted to them.
In general, informal means of social control are used more in traditional societies and formal means of social control are used more in urban societies. There is greater tolerance of individual deviance in modern societies than in traditional societies. Modern societies also divide deviance into sin and crime. Sin is considered a moral problem and private while crime is considered as violation of norms and a societal problem. The courts punish crimes while sins are left to individual conscience to deal with. For example, sexual relationship before marriage is considered a sin but not a crime. It is up to the individual to decide whether he will engage in such relationship or not. But if the individual steals an article he will be punished. However in traditional societies like Iran adultery is considered a sin and a crime and is punished by the government.

**Agencies of Social Control**

1) **State.** In modern societies the state is the most powerful agency of social control. It has monopoly over the use of legitimate violence on the citizens. Its numerous organizations monitor, regulate and control the actions of the citizens. Its coercive agencies like the police and the army can use force to maintain law and order. No other organization of the modern society can match the power of the state and hence the state in most societies cannot be challenged directly. The civil society can merely restrict the expanding sphere of the state and perform the role of the watchdog to prevent the misuse of authority by the state functionaries.

2) **Religion and religious institutions.** Religion gives its adherents a set of beliefs, codes of conduct and meanings to everyday life. Religion can appeal to the need for spirituality and after life rewards for good behaviour.
3) Family is the primary agent of socialization and hence an important agent of social control. Family structure and values influence individual personality.

4) Neighborhood of the individual often represents the subculture in which the individual develops. It presents the standard by which the individual measures his achievement and failure.

5) Public opinion is defined as widely held opinion on a particular subject. Public opinion matters as most people would want to be accepted by the society rather than be an object of criticism and hostility.

6) Education institutions like school, college and universities are important agents of social control as it is here that the individual learns to be part of the larger community, away from his/her family.

7) Media is an important agency of social control and its importance is growing in the modern world.

8) Professional bodies like bar council, medical council regulates the conduct of their professionals.

**Social Control — Dysfunctional Aspects**

The prerequisite for social control is that there is a standard of acceptable codes of behaviour. It is to prevent deviance from these codes that social control is applied. However there are a number of problems that are associated with what is acceptable to society.

1) Do all members agree with the values, norms and laws of the society or are there groups within the society who are not in agreement with the values? Deviance is a relative concept.

2) Are there sections in the society who are unable to follow the norms of the society because of the situation in which they are? Some sections that are denied access to resources of the society may use unlawful means to attain their goals.
3) Are the means of social control applied to the deviants fair and just? Prisons in most countries are means to punish people rather than reform them.

Firstly norms, rules are not always just and humanitarian in nature. The caste system in India divided the Hindu society into different castes and placed them in hierarchy one above the other. The lowest in the hierarchy was the untouchables who were severely discriminated to the extent of restricting them from being seen in public. They were prohibited from using public facilities and punished if they read the sacred works or entered temples. In these cases social control methods were used to force people to accept subordinate positions. Inspite of these restrictions untouchable communities frequently tried to change their statuses. Another example is the salt Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi who consciously broke the salt law that was promulgated by the government of the day. Many laws passed by the colonial government were unjust and to legitimate oppression.

Robert Merton analytically separates two elements of the society—cultural goals and institutionalized means. Cultural goals are socially acknowledged desired goals like money, power, and prestige etc. while institutionalized means are acceptable and legitimate means to achieve these goals. For example, becoming wealthy is desired goal and investing in share market to gain profits is a legitimate means to achieve that goal. However in some societies there may be a stress on the goals and not complete adherence to the institutionalized means while in other societies there maybe stress on the close adherence to institutionally prescribed conduct while goals are neglected. Societies fall in between these extremes as they try to balance goals and institutional means and also maintain stability in society.
Logically there are five responses of individuals to the societal goals and the institutionalized ways to achieve these goals.

i) The conformist who conforms to the goals set by society and adapts the institutional and legitimate ways to achieve these goals.

ii) The innovator who has accepted the goals but not the institutionalized means to achieve the goals. Criminals are part of innovators.

iii) The ritualism which accepts the means and goals but scales down the goals to lower limits and is satisfied with it.

iv) Retreatism involves the rejection of the goals and means and withdrawing from society to the private world.

v) Rebellion means rejecting the goals as well as the means to achieve these goals. The rebel wants to change the goals as well as the institutional means to reach the goals.

Merton’s contribution points out that social control and deviance are not simply about the violation of codes set by society. In many cases social structures itself produce deviance by producing situations where a cultural breakdown has taken place. Goals are stressed but the means to reach the goals are not available to all.

**Foucault on Punishment and Control**

Foucault a postmodern thinker has given new insights to the problem of control of individual behaviour. Foucault’s thinking on the subject is quite complex and what is presented here is a simplified version of his views on control. Foucault views individual as a totally free being and any restrictions on it as limiting his freedom. He essentially disagreed that the human history after
enlightenment was process of human liberation. Only the methods of controlling had changed but basically the elite through the modern technology has increased its control of the individual behaviour. Techniques of control in modern society differ from the pre-modern society. In the pre-modern society crime was seen as a direct challenge to the king's authority and punishment which included painful tortures aim of which were to assert the king's authority to punish people. Modern society has given up the painful tortures and has adopted more “humane” methods such as imprisonment. But keeping the prisoners under constant observation and making them feel that there are always under observation and they are made to discipline themselves.

Modern society has increasing means to put the entire population into systematic surveillance. The agencies that are involved in the surveillance of the population are not only the police or the secret service but also virtually every organization which is able to gather information about the population. The public health department and education department are just two departments that collect information about population and use it to discipline the population with their specialized knowledge. These agencies do not have the authority to use violence to control the population but they are as effective if not more effective as organizations that use force.

Foucault saw the relation between the power and knowledge. The power to define what is knowledge and what is not knowledge is power. Converting an opinion into knowledge allows the statements based on it as being truth for others. Modern society has given professions and professionals the power to decide right and wrong. In reality professionals are involved in disciplining people. Knowledge/power allows the elite to control people by claiming scientific validity for its findings. For example a
doctor's opinion is adhered to by the patient because it is considered to be expert knowledge and based on scientific knowledge. This allows the doctor to control the patient behaviour.

In social work practice with their clients a binary polarity is established that privileges and rewards certain types of behaviour and punishes others. (Foucault quoted in Dominelli, 2004). Foucault advocated that there were no self-evident truths. It is based on religious knowledge or on scientific knowledge. Truth, ethics and any standard set for individuals were means to control them. These are mere inventions to help discipline the population.

But Foucault radical views have many critics. Some of them have pointed out the following limitations (1) David Couzens Hoy points out that if all structures and knowledge is oppressive then resistance is not only futile but also is not needed. that deprives people of obtaining points of resistance against oppressive regimes. Thus Foucault's ideas though educative lead to nihilism. (2) Further, Foucault has not given any particular goal or situation which is to be attained which deprives it of the power to initiate any social action (3) Foucault position on the Iranian revolution one of the few times he took a political events turned out to be a major mistake as the Islamic regime became as oppressive as the shah regime it replaced. Inspite of these limitations Foucault’s contributions have highlighted several issues related to social work profession, practice and knowledge base.

**Social Work, Groups, Institutions and Social Control**

Knowledge about groups is necessary as group work is a method of social work. You will study about groups in greater detail later.
An individual lives in society, but society is too large and abstract entity to directly influence an individual. Often it is through groups and institutions part of which the individual belongs that the individual behaviour is controlled. Social worker has to understand the role groups and institutions play in the life of their client systems. In many cases the problem is caused because of lack of the effectiveness of the groups and institutions. For example a disorganized family with no role models is likely to have delinquent children. These children experience ineffective socialization leading to inability to respect authority and obey rules. On the other hand, the problems can be caused due to a high degree of social control. Members of delinquent gangs often commit crime to impress gang members and to gain acceptance. Some groups go even further when their members are made to lose their individual identity and merge completely within the group identity. Goffman calls these institutions ‘total institutions’. Often these institutions are manipulated by individuals who make use of the weak personality of their members. Members of cults, terrorist groups and even political parties are examples of these types of relationship between individual and groups. Social worker has to analysis this relationship. The cultural context is very important as different societies have different degrees of autonomy for individuals. If the group is negative in the sense that members are influenced to commit deviant act the social worker aims at distancing the member from the group emotionally and physically. This involves counselling, behaviour modification therapies and administrative measures to remove the person from the group. Again if the problem is lack of social control than the social worker works with the client and his social environment and makes changes; for example, he works with the family to resolve its problems and provide adequate care for the children.
In case of social institutions also the approach of the social worker will depend on her understanding of the role of the client in the social institutions. For example in marriage the root of the problem maybe because of the differing perceptions of the partners regarding marriage resulting in burdening each other with over expectations. Social worker uses his methods to allow partners to gain greater awareness about self and other to resolve this problem. On the other hand if the institution is based on unfair premises than the social work takes action to reform or even eliminate these institutions. In such cases social worker initiates steps for legislative and policy level action to resolve the problem along with micro level efforts. These steps are necessary as often it is the discriminated groups like women and dalits that suffer from negative effective of excessive social control.

The concept of social control gives a starting point for reflection to the social workers. Is social work practice a part of the disciplining process by which the elites control the population? Social workers often collect vital and personal information about the population. They directly engage in the process of disciplining the poor by defining the problem using the professional knowledge. Social workers actively participate in normalizing the deviants of the society (Dominelli, 2004). Thus social workers are part of the process of regulating human behaviour. Research has pointed out that many social workers do feel that care and control is, complementary. So whose interests are social work? Those of the elites or those of the clients whose interests we claim are of paramount importance. Foucauldian analysis will undermine the status of social work profession as it questions the latent function of social work. It reminds social work professionals to continuous challenge the major assumptions and knowledge of social work.
Conclusion

Social groups, social institutions and are part of the society to regulate and influence social life. Without these life would be chaotic and disorderly. Social groups give an identity and belongings to the individuals. More importantly it also provides resources, which are crucial to the individual. At the same time it demands the loyalty and respect of the individual. If the individual does not meet the group’s expectation the individual can be removed from the groups and denied the privileges of membership. Social institutions are recognized ways of doing things, which comprises of a number of roles, groups and agencies in it. Social institutions are interrelated and together form the society.

As social workers, we often work within the social institutions and by our expertise make these institutions effective. On the other hand, social workers will challenges the values and norms that provide the foundation for the social institutions. Social workers are often part of an effort to reconstruct these institutions. Social workers thus respond to the institutions according to their analysis of the situation. This in turn depends on the ideology of the social worker.

References


Introduction

Social change is ubiquitous. Every society experiences change some times rapidly and some times slowly. Social change often affects people differently. At times, certain sections of the society benefit while some other sections are hurt by the process of change. The imposition of Zamindari system during the British rule benefited the property owners but pauperized the peasantry. Social change is often caused by factors, which are beyond the control of the members of the society. On the other hand, elite sections initiate social change and they control the factors and agencies of social change. Nevertheless, even when social change is beyond their control and is inevitable it is the elite sections which are better prepared and better equipped to benefit from change. Globalization is an inevitable process – for the elite it has meant the growth of opportunities while for the poor it has meant further depravation and increased vulnerability.

The dominant sections benefiting from status quo often resist social changes, advantageous to the oppressed sections. Untouchability is banned by the constitution of India and is punishable by law. The aim is to bring up equality and prevent discrimination of the lower castes — an important social change. However, this change is resisted by the dominant castes explicitly or implicitly.

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Social worker’s role is very crucial in this situation. His/her role is to ensure that change, which is favourable to the oppressed classes, takes place. In order to do this she needs to understand the process of change, factors of change and agencies of change. This Chapter will help him to understand these processes.

Social Change: Characteristics and Sources

Let us go through some of the definitions of social change that will introduce us to the concept of social change.

Jones: Social change is a term used to describe variations in, modifications of any aspect of social processes, social patterns and social interactions or social organization.

Davis: Social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society.

Gillin and Gillin: Social changes are variations from the accepted modes of life; whether due to alteration in geographical conditions, in cultural equipment, composition of the population.

Mazumdar, H.T.: Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old, in the life of people, or in the operations of society.

Merrill and Eldredge: Social change means that large numbers of persons are engaging in activities that differ from those which they or their immediate forefathers engaged in sometime before.

Therefore only those changes at the societal level in the structure and the values in the society can be termed as social change.

Levels of Social Change

There are two levels of social change (1) Macro Level and (2) Micro Level.
Marco level changes are changes that occur in the larger human collective at the global level and national level are called macro level changes. On the other hand, changes that occur in the family and village level are micro level changes. These levels of changes are not isolated from each other and influence each other. Social worker programmes and activities produce change at the micro level.

**Characteristics of Social Change**

According to Moore social change in contemporary societies, have the following characteristics:

For any society or culture rapid change occurs frequently or constantly.

Changes are neither temporally and spatially isolated, that is, changes occur in sequential chains rather than as temporary crisis followed by quiet periods of reconstructions and the consequences tend to reverberate through entire regions or virtually the entire world.

Thus because contemporary change is probable everywhere and its consequences may be significant everywhere it has a dual basis.

The proportion of contemporary change that either is planned or issues from the secondary consequences of deliberate innovations is much higher than in former times.

Accordingly, the range of material technology and social strategies is expanding rapidly and the net effect is additive or cumulative despite the relative obsolescence of some procedures.

The normal occurrence of change affects a wider range of individual experience and functional aspects of societies in the modern world —not because such societies are in all respects more integrated but because virtually no feature of life is exempt from the expectation or normality of change.
Sources of social change

Sources of change are divided into endogamous and exogamous. Endogamous sources of change are sources which are found within the society while exogamous sources of change are from outside the society. Examples of endogamous sources of change are innovation, migration, social movements, while exogamous changes are by technology transfers, from foreign countries invasions and interaction between different societies.

Most countries in the world have made significant borrowings in the last four hundred years from the western countries. Enlightenment in Europe brought the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern period. This period saw the growth of rationality and science and the decline of religious dogma. The application of rationality in brought about advancement in science and technology. Capitalism and consequently the search for new markets started the colonization process and by the nineteenth century, most areas of the globe were under the rule of the colonial powers—Britain, US, Germany, France Holland. These colonial powers imposed the modern values and technology on their colonies. Colonial countries got modern values through their colonial powers. Since the process was forced rather than voluntarily, it is a major source of many problems. Problem related to religious, tribal and ethnic issues could be traced to the policies of colonial government policy. The British policy of divide and rule and partition of the India is an example of the problems created by colonization.

However the process of modernization is not accepted uncritically and enthusiastically by traditional societies.

Blumer points out five ways in which a traditional society can respond to the process of modernization.
Five ways of Modernization

1) Rejective response
The traditional society rejects modernization, as modern values are hostile to the indigenous values. The elite of the society also resist modern values if they feel that their power is threatened.

2) Disjunctive response
Disjunctive response allows the coexistence of both tradition and modernity with each having its own sphere of influence. Some areas of individual are governed by modern values while other areas are governed by tradition values.

3) Assimilative response
Assimilative response means the absorption of the modern values and institutions by traditional society without disrupting the existing order. It involves a creative and gradual incorporation of the modern institutions into society without harming elite interests and popular sentiments.

4) Supportive response
The supportive response accepts modern values and uses them to augment the authority of the traditional order. Often technology is used by the landed elite to increase their productivity which increases their power and domination over others.

5) Disruptive response
The disruptive response results in the undermining and even destruction of the existing institutions. This response occurs when adaptation is not possible.

Societal responses to modernization have varied from society to society and from situation to situation. Different groups even within a society have exhibited different
response to the modernization process. According to Yogendra Singh the Indian response to modernizations has been adaptation and assimilation rather than through replacement and disruption. The elasticity of Indian tradition has allowed for its gradual assimilation of modern values without causing major disruption in the society.

Social change is a very complex and controversial topic. Very often social change is seen through the prism of the political, social, and personal viewpoints. We would see certain changes as being important and significant while other changes as being insignificant. For example take the widespread view on westernization in India. Most Indians believe that while westernization has changed many of our values and institutions we have remained Indian. However, this point is highly debatable as there is no consensus on what is Indian and what is not Indian. If we say that religion, spirituality or even more vaguely an Indian way of life is the core of being an Indian we would find it difficult to identify the constituents of these elements. Indian religions and the way of life have experienced profound changes in the last two hundred fifty years. Further, there is so much plurality in the Indian traditions each of which has evolved through the centuries and is accepted by major groups. Therefore, social scientists have long debated whether a common identifiable entity called Indian exists. If we include the experience of other societies in the world then the idea of social change becomes even more complicated. We are so much part of the process of social changes that studying it becomes difficult.

The early sociologists attempted to identify the various stages in the development of the human society. Social change is a constant process. Historically change has taken place from simple societies to complex societies. Simple
Basic Social Science Concepts

Societies are characterized by organizations based on kinships for governance, basic forms of division of labour, low level of technology used and a subsistence economy. Most of these societies are pastoral or agrarian in nature. Rural life predominate these societies on the other hand, complex societies are characterized by the presence of specialized institutions, advance level of technology, complex forms of division of labour and an advanced economy. Urban life predominate these societies. They are industry or postindustrial societies. There have been definite changes from the earlier times to the present. However, these changes have taken thousands of years. For many hundred years, the traditional societies did not experience significant changes. It is only in the last three hundred years that social change has become rapid and people have begun to prepare for these changes. However, it is not possible that any society stood still for a considerable length of time.

Gerth and Mills have offered a model of social changes. Six questions are asked about the changes:

1. what is that changes
2. how does it changes
3. what is the direction of change
4. what is the rate of change
5. why did change occur or why was it possible?
6. what are the principal factors in social change?

Social change can take place in social institutions or in the relationship between the institutions—political institutions like the state, political parties, religious institutions, family and economic institutions. Changes can take place in the relationships between institutions like in the political and the religious institutions. For example in the western societies, the last hundred years have seen the distancing between the political institutions and the religious institutions because of secularization. On the other hand, in Islamic societies these institutions are coming closer due to increased Islamization of the society.
There is no unanimity among sociologists on the relative influence of various factors that cause social change. According to the sociologists, whose leading exponent is Max Weber, social change can be in the realm of values—knowledge and ideas, art, religious and moral doctrines etc. Max Weber traces the emergence of capitalism in the doctrines of Protestantism. Protestantism especially the Calvinists propagated the view that man had a direct relationship with god with no intermediataries in between like the church. The frugal lifestyle changes in the values and institutions are interrelated. Very often it is change in the ideas that bring about change in the institutions. The idea of democracy and people participation brought about the evolution of parliamentary system and political parties. They were not needed in a monarchy, as there was no need to allow participation of the people in policymaking. On the other hand, changes in the institutions bring about changes in the values. Economic institutions like market and industries brought about urbanization, which led to replacement of collectivism with individualism and personal relation found in rural community with impersonal relations in urban community.

Any change needs a point of departure a reference point from which you can measure the change. Significant changes include move from joint families to nuclear families, from simple division of labour to complex division of labour, from use of animate sources of power to inanimate source of power, from monarchies to democracies. However not all areas experience change simultaneously.

William Ogburn’s concept of cultural lag is a popular explanation of how different parts of the same culture change at different rates. Ogburn divided culture into two-material culture that included technology, material artifacts, and non-material culture which included
institutions, values and laws. Technology advances at a faster rate than the institutions required managing and controlling technology. For example, human society has developed nuclear bombs but the existing institutions are inadequate to manage them and prevent a human catastrophe.

Another example of cultural lag is in the role of women at work and family. Women have increasingly begun to work outside the homes after industrialization however, their role in the family have not changed significantly as they are expected to perform their traditional role of mother and wife. Thus technology brought about a change in the work place whereas there has been insignificant change in the family leading to cultural lag. The resistance to change is due to the force of habit, traditional ways of thinking, fear of the consequences of change and disturbance of the existing power structure.

Morris Ginsberg has summarized the viewpoints of different sociologists to explain change. (i) the conscious desires and decisions of individuals exemplified by the development of the small family system in western countries (ii) individuals acts influenced by changing conditions like the decline of village in England between 1300 and 1500 (iii) structural changes and structural strains (iv) external influence (v) outstanding individuals or groups of individuals (vi) a confluence or collocation of elements from different sources converging at a given point of time as in during the revolution (vii) fortuitous occurrences and (viii) the emergence of a common purpose.

Sources of Change in India

Indian State

The Indian state has been a major source of change. It has attempted to take the country to the values enshrined in the constitution. After India’s independence the Indian
political leaders had to decide which model of development to adopt to suit Indian national interests and attain its social and economic interests. Economically, two influential models available were the capitalist model followed by the US and west European countries and the centralized socialist planning model of erstwhile USSR. The mixed model was adopted by the government characterized by limited planning, a dominant role for public sector, and control over the private sector and control of imports. The state had a predominant role in the economical sector. The planning commission was set up to formulate five year plans to intervene in the economy with the following aims; ensure equitable growth; full employment; balanced regional development.

In the social sector too the state took upon itself the role of a modernizer. Social legislation related to marriage, family, castes and women were passed. Positive discrimination in the form of reservations in jobs and educational institution for the schedule castes and schedule tribes were established. Several social welfare schemes were formulated for the welfare of the weaker sections. The government took a central role in the social and economic field.

By the 1970s the failure of the government was becoming obvious. Economic reforms were started in 1980s and 1990s transformed the role of the government in the economic sector. A greater role for market and private sector, freeing import restrictions and reducing the role of the public sector limited the role of the government in the economy. Government role became that of facilitator rather than the main actor.

Similar changes were made in the social sector also. In the First Five Year plan the government took the lead role in social reforms and providing social services for the
vulnerable sections. Development was also the main aim
of the government. The Community Development
programmes were started in 1952 with aim of accelerating
social development by using community resources and
government resources. However the developmental
experience of the early decades showed that the
government was largely ineffective in implementing
development programmes. By the Seventh Plan period, the
government started to grant a greater role for the voluntary
sector and recognized its contribution. By that time the
number and nature of NGOs also started changing.

Changes in Voluntary Sector

Limitations with NGOs

Some of the changes in the voluntary sector were:

1) Proliferation of NGOs and spread of NGOs into different
geographical areas.

2) Voluntary sector moved from being charity and welfare
based to development and empowerment based
approaches.

3) Increase in funding from foreign and domestic agencies
increase in the number of professionals and increasing
professionalization of NGOs. Social workers,
management graduates, engineers and medical
professionals are increasing entering the sector for
employment and altruistic reasons.

4) Increasing recognition of the importance of capacity
building and professional management in NGOs

5) Entry of NGOs in specialized issues like environment,
natural resources management, Dalits, human rights
etc.

6) Formation of networks of NGOs within country and
outside the country leading to considerable increase
in their national and international political power.
7) Increasing involvement of NGOs in government policy formulation and implementation.

8) Increasing exposure to NGOs activity in media and academics.

However, the functioning of NGOs has not been free from criticism

1) Lack of accountability and transparence on financial matters

2) Ineffective implementation

3) Programmes being based on donor priorities rather than the needs of the population

4) Foreign fund dependency and misuse

5) Corruption and mismanagement

6) Low salary and poor employment condition. Ill-treatment of employees

7) Project based activity with no follow-up and lack of sustainability

8) Small size and lack of expertise

9) Decline in volunteerism and emergence of business practices

10) Concentration of NGOs in certain areas and duplication of services

11) Cooption by government

12) Cooption by the local elites

13) Believing in incremental changes at the cost of radical changes which is needed and thereby derailing the efforts of radical social movements.

The complete dominance of the state in the process for attaining a modern society is still important but diminished
comparing to the early decades after Independence. The present model advocates a limited government with largely autonomous civil society and market. Government acts in the economy as a regulator and a protector of the consumers.

**Urbanization**

The growth of population in urban areas is urbanization. Urbanization is caused due to three factors (i) movement of population from rural areas to urban areas (ii) natural increase due to births in urban areas (iii) declaration of rural areas as urban areas when they meet the criteria like population, density and occupation.

Urbanization is a factor in economic growth and an indicator of development. In the Europe and US urbanization and industrialization proceed simultaneously. However in the developing countries urbanization has been also due to push factors in the rural areas. Migration from rural to urban area is due to distress in rural areas not because there are opportunities in urban areas. This kind of migration has distorted the urbanization pattern in developing countries.

Urbanization is not simply a movement from rural areas to urban areas. It results in major changes in values, structure and behaviour of the community. Urbanization has had a significant effect on the caste system. The anonymity and impersonal relations found in the city has given greater freedom to the oppressed groups like dalits and women. It is difficult to practice untouchability when the caste of other person are not known. People traveling in buses and trains eating in hotels rarely know the castes of the person sitting near them or serving food to them. Thus urban life contributed to changing the nature of caste system. Women enjoy greater latitude in the city where as there are several restrictions on them in the rural areas.
Urban areas often provide people with employment opportunities of diverse nature. Unlike in rural areas where there are restrictions on the type of employment an individual can take up in cities there are no such restrictions. Opportunities for upward movement are greater in urban areas as merit and hard work are given greater emphasis than the person, caste or religion. However it is not to be assumed that caste practices completely absent in the city. Milton Singer’s study in Madras city shows that caste plays a significant role in the recruitment of workers in the industries.

On the other hand, urbanization has lead to decline in community feelings among the people. Crime, riots and communal violence are largely an urban phenomena. Ashis Nandy points out that the feeling of rootlessness and identity in urban areas increases the propensity of urbanites to use violent methods.

**Cultural interaction — Sankritization and westernization**

Sankritization is an endogenous source of social change. Sankritization is a process by which members of the lower caste or tribal or other group changes its custom, ritual, ideology, and the way of life in the direction of the high and frequently twice born caste (Srinivas, 1972). He cites the example of Harijans in Mysore not accepting cooked food and water from Smiths though the later are above them and is higher in the hierarchy. Lower castes and tribals adopt these practices to obtain upward mobility within the caste system and in many cases, they are successful. However there is only positional changes within the caste system but there is no structural changes. Sankritization acknowledges the values of the caste system.

Social activists have criticized the Sankritization model for upward mobility by lower castes as it means accepting the main tenet of the caste system that is the castes are
basically unequal. Sankritization thus only strengthens the caste system instead of challenging it and bring about real equality. Secondly, Sankritization is not always successful as there is often resistance from the upper castes towards attempts of the lower castes to adopt their customs. Thirdly Sankritization destroys the culture of the lower castes and reinforces their feeling of inferiority. In contrast to Sankritization there have been attempts at revivalism and indigenization among the lower castes and the tribal population. These movements seek to instill a pride in the original culture of the oppressed people. The cultural traits of the oppressed people whether it is food habits, dress, music is revived and is attributed with greater dignity and respect. It is claimed that the culture of the oppressed people gives greater freedom to the people than the narrow and restrictive culture of the upper castes. The treatment of women is an example. While the brahminical culture places a number of restrictions on the women including prescribing sati for widowed women the subaltern cultures allows women to remarry. Similarly, purdah is prescribed to the upper caste women while the shudra women need not follow these rules. Thus, it is brahminical culture that has to learn from the shudra culture and not vice versa.

The process of indigenization is a process of culture assertion that is a step towards liberation. Antonio Gramci, Fannon and Macolm have seen these as a major steps towards the liberation of the oppressed people. Cultural assertion is the first step towards formation of new identity and rejection of the self-images that has given by the oppressor to the oppressed. The next step would be to organize the oppressed, challenge the structure of the society, and bring about change. Activists of the Afro Americans community in America and the indigenous peoples in South America have adopted this strategy to empower the people. However, the use of these approaches
has challenges as mainstream culture is dominated by the culture of the dominant sections of the society. The main organs of cultural reproduction are owned and controlled by the dominant sections.

**Westernization**

According to M.N. Srinivas, westernization is the “changes in technology, institutions, ideology, and values of a non-western society as a result of cultural contact with the society for a long time”. Our political system and legal system have been largely borrowed from the west. Religious reform in the last two hundred years has been guided by western humanitarian philosophy. Many of the successful attempts to rationalize religion and get rid of abominable practices have taken place due to western influence.

**Secularization**

Secularization is defined by Bryan Wilson as the “process whereby religious thinking, practice, and institutions lose social significance”. Secularization means that more and more areas of the individual life are governed by rational and utilitarian principles rather than religious values. Secularization in west has resulted in a secular state. A state that does not have an official religion does not support any religion and treats all religions equally. India is also experiencing secularization process. Our constitution and government are based on humanitarian principles not on any religious ideology. Except for the personal laws, which govern marriage, divorce, adoption, succession, and maintenance. Other laws are common to all and there is no difference in the treatment of individuals of different religions. There is no official religion and no religion is favored over others.

At the level of the individual and community, also the influence of secularization was significant. M.N. Srinivas points out that Hinduism more than any religion was
affected by secularization. The principle of purity and pollution, which was central to Hinduism, weakened largely due to secularism. The principle of purity and pollution governed the every day life of the traditional Hindu and to some extent even of members of other religion. Members of lower castes, human fluids, and carcass of animals were polluting objects and contact with them polluted the person. The person had to undergo a ritual ceremony to remove the pollution and become pure again. Industrialization, westernization, urbanization and the increasing influence of rationalist and humanitarian ideologies were influential in the decline of this principle. Secularization is seen in the change of many rituals and ceremonies, which were related to the life cycle of the individual. marriage, name-giving rituals have been secularized.

Education

The gradual expansion of modern education is a major force of change in India. Modern education is different from traditional education in the following ways. (1) It is open to all sections of the society unlike traditional education which was restricted to certain sections of the society (ii) education has become the main transmitter of culture in modern society. Modern culture stresses equality, importance of the individual and science. (iii) The very experience of studying in educational institution with diverse students changes the students' outlook.

However there are limitations in the educational system that tends to limit the efficacy of education as a source of change. The reach of educational system is limited considering that the literacy rate is 64 per cent for the general population and less than seven per cent enter institutions of higher learning. Without an experience in these institutions it becomes difficult for an individual to enter the fast globalizing job market.
Social Movements
Social movements are collective action by groups of people to create or resist change. Labour movements, religious movements, caste movements, women movements have taken place in India with varying successes. Many of these movements have used violent means to achieve their goals. The succession movements in Punjab and naxalite movement are examples of violent movements.

Successful movements change the way participants look at themselves and at society. Often it also changes how the larger society views them. A new identity is created which offers hope and opportunity for change for these sections. The government is often forced to address the demands of the movement. Rarely does a movement achieve complete success in its endeavors.

Conflicts
Conflicts can be of many types— conflicts between communities based on religion, caste, language and ethnic origins; conflict between government and communities conflict between workers and capitalists; conflicts between workers and landlords and conflict between generations. Conflicts often result in the creation of new structure and institutions. Trade unions, peasant organizations and caste organizations are the products of conflicts.

Major Factors Of Social Change
Technological factors
Technological innovations accepted and used in society has been a major factor of social change. Historically many changes in social structure are traced to advancements in the technology. The invention of wheel lead to faster and comfortable travel between larger distances than was possible on the horseback. Two major consequences of this development are greater control of administration over
larger areas and increased trade and commerce. The invention of the plough was major factor in changing communities from the stage of hunting and gathering stage to settled agricultural communities. The use of the printing press lead to increased availability of books to the general population and decreased the control of literate elite over the population. The emergence of Protestantism in Europe was assisted by the increased availability of the printed version of the Bible, which was made available by the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg.

The emergence of the modern period first in Europe and later on in rest of the world was primarily because of the industrial revolution. The invention of the steam engine and subsequently other sources of energy boosted the productivity of the production process. Mass production became possible which lead to search for new markets, the result of which was colonialism.

Other significant examples of change are; the invention of modern medicine. In the present society, technology has played even a greater role in bringing about social change. Communication technology has played an important role in globalization the process by which the world is transforming into a global village. The rise of communication technology and information technology has also given rise to new occupations. For example, IT professionals with large salaries are an important element in the consumer and real estate market. Thus, the rise of new technologies has had important changes in society

**Economic Factors**

Economic factors are playing an important role in producing social change. Many social thinkers have given economic factors a predominant role in producing social change. Karl Marx, Frederick Engel, and others in the Marxist traditions had stressed that it is the economic factors namely the forces of production and relations to
the forces of production that had produced macro level changes. They went on to emphasis that changes in other sphere namely in politics, family or religion reflect the changes in the forces of production. Marx saw the evolution of society in the following stages:

Primitive communist society where the forces of production were low and therefore there was no surplus. Stratification was negligible.

Feudal society — settled agriculture was possible and therefore surplus existed. Stratification was high and the society was divided into estates — property owner’s serfs.

Capitalist society— capitalist society was the product of industrialization. There was a large amount of surplus and therefore there was increased degree of stratification— mainly between the capitalist and the workers.

Communist society — Marx believed that capitalism would increase the gap between the capitalists and the workers leading to the impoverishment of the workers. The workers would lead a revolution, which will herald a new society a communist society in which all forces of production are socialized, and there would be no private ownership of factories land etc. stratification would end.

Marx’s view of that the economic factors play the predominant role in social change has been contested by others who have emphasized other factors. According to Max Weber cultural factors can also be a factor for social change independent of economic factors. Protestantism brought about capitalism by motivating its adherents to practice certain virtues and rules.

However, there is no doubt that economic factors play an important role in social change. Industrialization leads to increasing urbanization and colonialism.
Cultural Factors
Culture consists of all values, ideologies, norms, mores, folkways, and laws prevalent in the society. Any society to survive should have a degree of commonality and stability in its culture. Without this it would be difficult for members to communicate and cooperate with each other. However, culture cannot remain static for long. Often ideologies are reinterpreted to suit new situations. If the new interpretations gain wide spread acceptance then it can lead to social change. Weber through his study of the relationship between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism points that capitalism emerged due to the values of Protestantism, which emerged after the reformation. His study of the moral codes of other religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism revealed no moral codes, which could have lead to the emergence of capitalism. Robert Merton another sociologist has studied the relationship between scientist and Protestantism and his conclusion was that protestant thinking and modern scientific are related.

Cultural factors causing social change are important area for study in postcolonial societies like India. The colonial powers introduced new cultural values in the societies. Equality, democracy, individualism were some of the values that the British introduced in society. After independence, the Indian government made the constitution based on these values. However there existed a gap between the values espoused by the constitution and those adhered to by the members of the society. Many of the Indian political and social problems can be traced to this dichotomy between the two antagonistic cultural values.

Demographic Factors
Demographic factors or population is an important factor of social change. An increase or decrease in population can influence the society. Indian population has increased from the year 1900 to more than six billion in the 2000.
This increase has positive as well as negative consequences. The large population puts the government under pressure to manage and provide basic needs in cities. In rural areas increased population increases land fragmentation leading to unviable land holdings. On the other hand, urban areas are over crowded. The situation becomes crucial if there is wide spread discontentment with the government.

Apart from the total population, the population distribution at different age structure is important. For example if the proportion of the senior citizens is high then the implications are different from those if the proportion of children are high. There are social implications for democratic variables like sex ratio.

While overpopulation is a major problem in India, it is under population that is the major problem in Western Europe. The fecundity rate of the European women is less the replacement level of 2.1. Many women are choosing not to have any children. This has lead to economic and social crises. Some small town and villages are closing down because there is no population left.

Governments fear that the working force will reduce drastically in the coming decades, which will result in loss of production. One way to solve the problem is to allow foreigners to come to large numbers. However, the rise of anti foreigner sentiments in the native communities restricts the use of this method.

**Ecological Factors**

Man and environment have a significant relationship. Culture of the region is determined largely by the experience the people have of the social and physical environment. A sudden or even a gradual change in the environment brings about changes in the society. A flood or earthquake would destroy the social fabric of the
community. It is suggested that the great ancient civilizations along the Nile river and the Indus river ended due to the cataclysmic changes in the course of the rivers. In the modern times communities disintegrated as they are forced to migrate from their traditional habitats and settle in new places. Displacement of people due to dams or mining projects have destroyed traditional ways of living and forcing people to adapt to different ways of living.

Theories of Social Change

According to Dube (1992) there are three types of theories that influence our understanding of social change.

1) **Apocalyptic Theories**

These are theories that viewed society as moving towards a final judgment that would result in an ideal society. The Judeo-Christian thinking saw the world moving towards the coming of the lord resulting in the end of the world. Secular theories of change exist in which the end of the world as we now know is predicted. Condorcet divided entire history into nine periods the last of which began with the French revolution to inaugurate the beginning of perfect age. Compete divided history into three stages Theological (2) Metaphysical legal (3) Positivistic. These periods saw the gradual replacement of the influence of the supernatural with dominance of science. Compete believed that rationality and science would bring about a perfect society. Marx’s stages of society — primitive communism—slavery-feudalism-capitalism and communism also reveal his optimism about a final society that would be without classes and exploitation. The factors of change which each of the theorists were different. Marx's saw change happening as result of material changes; changes in area of production while others saw changes emerging out of ideas mainly science and innovations.
2) **Evolutionary**

The evolutionary theories differ from apocalyptic theories as it advocates claim that progress not perfection is achieved when society progress. Spencer, Morgan, Darwin and up to an extent Tonnies are advocates of this view. Spencer saw the society from moving from militant to industrial the first characterized by hierarchy and obedience and the latter characterized by voluntary and contractual nature of relationship. Structures in the former are simple and homogeneous while the latter are characterized by differentiation and complexity. Tonnies also advocated a linear progress— from Gemeinschaft (community) to Gesellschaft (association). Gemeinschaft societies have the following features (1) individual is subordinated to community (2) strong commitment to religion (3) common property is predominant (4) loyalty to the larger group is strong. The Gesellschaft societies have the following features (1) individual will prevail over the collective will (2) secular values predominant (3) contractual relations are prevalent.

3) **Cyclical Theories**

Cyclical theories see society as moving between different stages endlessly. Spengler’s Decline of the West, Toynbee’s study of history and Sorokin’s social and cultural dynamics are prominent contributions. Sorokin’s approach has been most influential. He explains change in terms of cultural mentalities. All culture are divided into three broad typologies: (1) Sensate culture emphasizing things which have relation to the senses (2) Ideational culture relates to things available to the spirit and (3) idealistic representing a combination of elements of sensate and ideational cultures. Every society alternates between these typologies. For example the culture can move from ideational to idealistic to sensate and back to idealistic and so on. Toynbee’s saw the growth and decline of civilization in
different periods of history. The impetus for growth comes from a ‘creative minority’ that provides energy to the society for growth and when they lose their creativity the society begins to disintegrate.

No single theory has been able to explain social change in the convincing manner. Linear theories popular till recently have been proved false. One example would be sufficient to prove the point— religiosity among the people. Most theorist predicted the end of the influence of religion when modern society evolves and growth of secular values. However apart from Europe and Japan religiosity continues to grow among the populations in different parts of the world.

**Social Work and Social Change**

According to Wayne Johnson social work can be conceptualized as helping people to cope with social change.

Professional social work is itself a product of social changes in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Some of the changes that lead to its rise of professional social work is (1) large scale migration from the rural communities to urban areas due to industrialization which destroyed traditional bonds and values that regulated and controlled individual behaviors (2) the rise of secular knowledge that saw human beings as the product of their circumstances rather than that of god will (3) the inherent limitations of the traditional institutions like family and churches to respond to the crises and the (4) rise of the state to take responsibility for the welfare of the people.

Social workers worked within the modernist paradigm, which saw progress in industrialization and modernization of the economy and spread of liberal attitudes. They mainly dealt with people who could not cope with these changes
and were losers in the process. The social worker therefore accepted the main tenets of modernity. The social worker also contributed to the welfare of the disadvantaged sections like children, women, and the physically challenged. They lobbied for legislations, which protected their rights and promoted their welfare. According to Eileen Younghusband social workers main contribution has to ‘see’ and address the problems of those sections of that are not visible to others. Social work in India was transplanted from the west. It shared most of the tenets and assumptions of the west. However, there have been attempts to indigenize the profession according to Indian situation with limited success.

Professional social work is often confronted with difficult situations. One important area of concern to social workers has been the issue of development. Development model that India had adopted had been uncritically accepted by majority of Indians and social work professionals. Now there are a number of criticisms that are directed towards that model of development. (i) it is environmentally unsustainable as the emphasis on big projects had resulted in the loss of forest cover, inundation of villages and cites, destruction of common property resources and lose of livelihood (ii) it is elite driven and benefits of development have accrued to the mainly to the elite at the cost of the poor (iii) local knowledge and practices have been neglected which was more cost effective and ecological friendly than modern practices (iv) it has increased the nation dependence on foreign funds and institutions thereby reducing the sovereignty of the country.(v) the model has adversely affected the vulnerable sections of the society like women, adivasis and dalits by not involving them in the process of development.

Often political leaders and policy makers seek to convince people that development is inevitable and desirable. They
ask for sacrifices from the people or sections of people. More likely than not it, these sections belong to disadvantaged sections of the society. India own development experience in the last sixty years show these characteristics. Indian state took a major role in taking the country to the path of development. The government implemented a number of large multipurpose projects to irrigate agricultural lands, control floods, produce electricity, and promote development. Mines were dug in order to exploit the natural resources like iron, aluminum, uranium etc. These efforts did contribute to the nation’s progress. However, there were adverse sequences to the people and nature. Large numbers of people were displaced and acres of forestland destroyed. Walter Fernandez estimated that 100 million people were displaced due to these projects most of who were not adequately rehabilitated. Forest cover reduced from 50 per cent to 23 per cent. The suffering of the people affected was justified by saying that it was necessary for the greater good of the country and for its development. However, this view has been increasingly contested and the approach has been described as anti people. This development has only benefited the elite sections of the society and the whole society. A quest is on for alternative model of development. If the present model of development is anti people then there should an alternate model of development. Socialist model of the erstwhile Soviet Union, which was based on state ownership and centralized planning has failed and has been rejected as a viable alternate. However, adherents of different ideologies including a variety of Marxists, Gandhians, socialists, and religious philosophers have advocated alternatives none of which as of now has received widespread acceptance. Social workers have often been at the forefront of the struggles against development-induced problems. The attitude of the social work towards the state (government) is also a problem. In the first decades after
independence social workers saw themselves as being advocates for a welfare state by expanding services and improving their quality. But now many see the government itself as being part of the exploitative structure. There is a need to rethink the relationship between professional social work and the state.

**Conclusion**

Social change is an important concern for social workers. Social work has a role in preparing the people especially the vulnerable sections of the society for change. In cases where changes occur which are inevitable social workers should help in creation of institutions which will support the vulnerable sections to tide over the difficult times. For example if India is adopting the capitalist model of development then social workers would have to participate in struggles to create a fully developed welfare state as it exists in the developed capitalist countries. In order to play the new role demanded by the emerging situation social workers have to relook at their own methods and techniques. Many social work methods were developed in the early and middle of the twentieth century. Newer techniques and strategies will have to be developed and adopted, which is the challenge for the social work profession in the twenty first century.

**References**


Introduction

Professional social work practice endorses social change in the society and problem solving in human relationships. Social work aims at the empowerment, liberation and well being of all persons. Social work practice mainly sees society as a laboratory and social workers work with individuals helping them to help themselves. Social work focuses on people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Thus social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities they serve.

Social work practice looks into the inequities and injustices that exist in the society. It addresses to the crises and emergencies and to everyday personal and social problems. Social work uses a range of skills, techniques, and activities to focus on persons and their environments. Social work interventions range from primarily person-focused psychosocial processes to involvement in social policy, planning and development. These include counseling, clinical social work, group work, social pedagogical work, and family treatment and therapy as well as efforts to help people obtain services and resources in the community. Interventions also include agency administration, community organisation and engaging in social and political action to impact social policy and economic

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development. The holistic focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will vary from country to country and from time to time depending on cultural, historical, and socio-economic conditions.

Social work is based on a systematic body of evidence-based knowledge procured from research and practice evaluation. It acknowledges the intricacy of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people both to be affected by and to alter the multiple influences upon them including bio-psychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individual, organisational, social and cultural changes. Social work is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice. A lot of this profession’s basic assumptions; concepts, principles, theories, methods and techniques are acquired from psychology.

**Definition of Psychology**

Psychology is a science that studies the behaviour of human beings. It is based on various theories and practical experiments dealing with different factors having an influence on the man’s personality and behaviour. The word psychology has been acquired from Greek writings and is a grouping of two words: ‘Psyche’ and ‘Logos’ that stand for ‘soul’ and ‘study of’. Initially psychology was understood as the study of the soul or spirit. Later the word soul was changed by the word mind. Over the years the nature of psychology has seen a lot of changes from assumptions to scientific support in explaining many of our day today human behaviour. Psychology is now considered the study of the mind, consciousness and behaviour of human beings.

The definition of psychology has been developing and evolving over the years. Most commonly used definition is
that psychology is “the science of human and animal behaviour, it includes the application of this science to human problems.”

Some of the accepted definitions of psychology are:

“Psychology is the positive science of behaviour.” : J. B. Watson

“Psychology is the study of human nature.”: Boring

“Psychology is the science of the activities of the individuals in relation to the environment.”: Woodworth

“Psychology deals with response to any and every kind of situation that life presents. By responses or behaviour is meant all forms of processes, adjustment, activities and expressions of the organism.” : Skinner

The definitions explain that psychology is a science that studies human behaviour and how this behaviour effects and gets effected by the environment.

**Branches of Psychology**

Psychology is divided into different branches according to its specialization. These different branches deal with psychology in the different aspects of human living. These branches are also called major sub fields of psychology. The psychologists in these different branches perform different roles and deals with different clientele. These different branches are:

**General Psychology:** This part of psychology deals with the psychological aspects of a normal human being. In General psychology the concentration is on concepts, theories and methods related to heredity and environment, growth and maturation, physiological bases of behaviour, sensation, perception and attention, feelings and emotions, learning, remembering and forgetting, thinking and reasoning, intelligence and personality including individual differences, aptitudes and reaction time.
Child Psychology: This part of psychology deals with the childhood of human being. The development of the human being from the conception to the attainment of the age of eighteen years is the subject matter in child psychology. Child psychology deals with stages, development and maturation, interactions between the child and other members of primary and secondary social groups and the society. All along childhood and adolescent stage a child develops his physical and mental structure. Development is a continuous process and changes in the child may not be always visible. In the early childhood the changes are very prominent, then it stabilizes and again in adolescence one can observe significant physical changes. Development is not of the same nature; it is not uniform all the time. During adolescence the child behaves inconsistently as in this stage there is confusion whether they are children or adults. They could suffer from internal conflict between of social values and sexual freedom. In this stage the psychologist can be of help in understanding the developmental stage and its milestones and the individual need and functioning.

Development Psychology: This branch of psychology studies and describes physical, mental, emotional and behavioural changes that happen with different age groups in human beings. Human being passes through eight stages normally from conception to death unless the life is cut short because of any disease or accident. These eight stages are: prenatal, infancy, early childhood, late childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood. Each of these stages is characterized by specific needs, abilities and problems. Developmental psychology deals with these needs and problems and helps understand the physical, mental, emotional and behavioural changes that occur in these stages.
Clinical Psychology: This sub field of psychology addresses the complexities of modern life that affects human beings. Men, women and children sometimes find it difficult to adjust to their social setting. They need help to adjust to their physical, social, emotional and mental components in their life situations. For example a child may not like to go to school. There could be many reasons for this problem. Either the child suffers from separation anxiety from his mother, or he has not been able to adjust to the school environment, or he has a learning disability so cannot keep pace with other children in school. The clinical psychologist could help understand the child’s problem and provide a solution to the problem. Clinical psychologist provides assistance to individuals for better adjustment, enhancement of their social life and prevention of mental disorders.

Counseling Psychology: This branch of psychology helps persons to assist with their personal problems that are of a milder form and are not psychological disorders. Counseling is very popular with developing better interpersonal skills that affect interpersonal relationships, help in career planning and selection. Counseling psychologists help people having problems with family living; these are the family or marriage counselors. Now a days we see there is a need for counselors in all kinds of institutions and organizations as they will deal with needs and problems of the individuals involved there, this could be employee or clientele.

Educational Psychology: This branch looks into all aspects of the educational process from techniques of learning to learning disabilities. Educational psychologist investigates and promotes the factors that are required for the optimal learning among students. Educational psychologists are concerned with increasing the efficiency of learning in the school by applying the psychological
knowledge of learning, memory and motivation to the school curriculum. Social worker in the school applies educational psychology when dealing with children and the scholastic requirements.

**Industrial and Organisational Psychology:** This form of psychology deals with industrial and organizational issues and concerns. It looks into behavioural characteristic in work place, like employee selection, employee performance, employee work motivation, developing leadership and better communication within the organization and industry. Industrial and Organisational psychology will help in understanding employees needs, solving their problems therefore improving the moral of employees which will in turn increase their output and this directly increases the productivity of the industry or organization.

**Social Psychology:** Individual spends most of their time with other individuals and behaves and interacts in different ways. This sub field of psychology studies aspects of social behaviour and social interaction, how individuals think and interact with other individuals. Social psychologists investigate attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes how these develop and impact human thinking and behaviour. Social psychology has helped social workers to develop effective interventions in the community and in groups. Group, group processes and group dynamics are dealt in social psychology and are used widely in the practice of social work. Social psychology is one of the bases for social work practice.

**Need for Psychology in Social Work**

An understanding of psychology is very useful for social work practice. The various branches of psychology help and support the various areas of social work practice. Like the school social worker or the industrial social worker or the community social worker or the counselor all of them
will benefit from the knowledge of psychology, as it will help them in understanding and dealing with individuals better in their different settings. In today's globalize world, development and changes are fast and it has affected the social and cultural fabric of the society. Increased competitiveness, materialism and self-centrism, changes in the family structures and employment patterns have increased the burden on individuals. All these changes have direct implications for social work practice. These changes are making it increasingly difficult for human beings to cope with the societal demands. These demands affect the way they think, feel and behave. Social workers have to tackle problems of higher mental health issues, stress and adjustment issues. Psychology provides knowledge and technique to devise ways of intervening effectively so that social problems can be reduced and individuals can be helped to achieve better adjustment in the society.

**Introduction to Personality**

Psychology also studies personality, its nature and development. Personality is another subject of great concern to social workers as they deal with human beings in different age groups and in different settings. Personality is a term that is commonly used. Personality is largely concerned with the external appearance and behaviour of individuals. Personality is usually attributed to a person on the basis of their personal appearance, or style in walking, talking, dressing, etc. Personality sometime is wrongly called "the character of the individual". Personality is purely a psychological term.

The term ‘personality’ is derived from the Latin word ‘Persona’ which means ‘mask’. In ancient Rome, actors used masks to hide their identity on the stage. Hence persona denotes ‘as one appears to others, not as one
actually is’. Persona does not indicate the internal organization of an individual that affects external behaviour. So persona does not represent the real personality.

Personality is something deeper than the outward appearance. It describes a person’s character, emotional disposition, sociability and other aspects of what a person says and does. It is the product of a long process of his physical, mental, emotional and moral development. Personality is a dynamic concept describing the growth and development of the psychological system of an individual.

Studying personality helps us to understand the functioning of an individual. It helps us to predict adult personality and personality disturbances. It will also help us to understand the behaviour of a person only if we know about the specific organization of his motives, beliefs, skills, attitudes etc. at different ages of the human being.

**Definition of Personality**

It is very difficult to find an ideal definition for personality. Different psychologists have different views about personality. They have defined personality according to their viewpoints. Some of the popular definitions of personality are:

Munn defined personality as the characteristic integration of an individual’s structure, modes of behaviour, interests, attitudes, capacities, abilities and aptitudes. The particular way in which these qualities are integrated in a particular person determines his personality.

According to Gorden Allport “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment.” This definition explains the dynamic nature
of the changing values of personality. It recognizes the importance of adjustment to the environment. It also stresses the importance of psychophysical systems, like the habits, sentiments, emotions and motives of an individual, which are psychological in nature, but have a physical base.

Walter Mischel defined personality as the distinctive patterns of behaviour, which comprise of their individual thoughts and emotions that characterize the individual’s adaptation to the situations of his or her life.

Weiten defines personality as an individual’s unique constellation of behavioural traits. Further a personality trait is a durable disposition to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations.

**Factors Contributing to the Development of Personality**

Personality of individuals differs in many ways and is also similar in many ways. There are no specific causes leading to changes in personality. But a number of factors interact with one another in the formation of personality and in its development.

**Heredity**

Heredity plays an important part in determining one’s personality. An individual gets his entire hereditary endowment at the time of conception from their father and mother through the genes located in the chromosomes. The personality pattern of a person is actually framed in the womb. A child inherits the personality characteristics like physique, sex, intelligence etc. from the father and the mother. Later these develop further on with their interaction with environment.
Environment
Environment is the surrounding in which the individual is born, brought up and lives in. Unfavorable conditions in the prenatal, postnatal, childhood and adolescence environment will have lasting and damaging influences on personality development of the individual. The important environmental factors that exert pressures on our personality formation are culture in which we grow up, our family, friends, social and group community we live in.

Culture
Culture establishes the norms, attitudes and values that are transmitted from one generation to the other. Culture is the tradition that is followed by the family, group and community the individual belongs to. Culture also influences our thinking, our behaviour and our personality.

The family
The formative years of the individual as a child are in the family with his parents and siblings. The family is the primary group of the individual. The warm and friendly relationship among the family members influences the personality development of the individual in a significant way. The child’s home environment, the school the child attends, their friends, the number of siblings, and the ordinal position of the child all contribute to their personality development. The presence of harmonious, loving, peaceful family atmosphere builds healthy personality development and vice versa too.

Economic Environment
Economic conditions of the individual is their financial status. Economic environment has a significant influence on the personality of the individual. Unfavorable economic conditions usually lead to the development of undesirable personality traits like inferiority feelings, nervousness,
emotionality, and lack of social initiative or sometimes-even bitterness against society.

**Social Role**
The social conditions in the family are also decisive factors in personality development of an individual. Family is the first school of the child and the parents are the first teachers. Family provides training to a child to adjust to other people, to control their emotional expressions, and to adjust to different settings. There is a continuous learning process between a child, its family and its social and community group.

**Social Situation**
A third factor that affects personality is the social situations that the individual comes across with. An individual’s personality may be generally stable and consistent. But it undergoes changes in different situations. Different demands made in different situations bring about different changes in personality. For example the sudden demise of the spouse of the individual affects the personality.

**Importance of Heredity and Environment**
An important question arises as to what plays a more important role in personality development? Is it Heredity or environment? The answer to this question is unanswered. Personality appears to be the result of both influences. Inherited qualities set the parameters or outer limits in shaping the personality. Social environmental factors can strengthen or weaken the inherited abilities. The social environment reinforces the development of inherited personality traits, as the child grows older. Heredity and environment are supplementary to each other. Personality development is influenced by both heredity and environmental factors.
Theories on Personality Development

Development of personality is a unique feature of an individual. Different psychologists approach personality development from different viewpoints or perspectives. There are a number of personality theories formulated by famous psychologists that help us to understand, explain and predict the personality of individuals. Different personality theories give us different understanding of personality development. Let us see what some of the popular theories have talked off.

Allport’s Trait Theory

G.B. Allport was the first personality theorist to put forward the trait approach to explain personality. He classified traits into cardinal, central and secondary traits. Cardinal traits are very effective and dominant. These are few in number. Central traits are the building blocks of personality. They are the focus of an individual’s personality. Secondary traits are less important. The most recent theory of personality is developed by R.B. Cattell. Cattell viewed personality as a complex structure of traits. He used the theory of factor analysis to develop his theory. According to him there are four types of traits.

1) Common traits: These are traits, which are distributed to the general population, traits, which are common to all people.

2) Unique traits: These are unique to a person.

3) Surface traits: These are traits, which are recognized by the manifestation of our behaviour. They are on the superficial level. They are readily observable.

4) Source traits: These are the underlying structures or the sources, which determine the behaviour of an individual. Source traits are more important than surface traits. These traits are the basic source of individuality.
Criticism
Critiques have questioned the reliability of this theory. As this theory does not give us a complete and accurate picture on the personality of individuals.

Freud’s Theory
The major contribution in this field of personality development comes from Sigmund Freud. He explained ‘personality’ as the existence of conscious, preconscious and unconscious in an individual. Freud’s theory is called the Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality Development. This theory assumes that the basic dynamics of personality includes the conflict between two opposing forces — anxiety arising from the inhibition of desires and defense against those desires that arouse anxiety.

Id, Ego and Super Ego
Freud also believed that our personality is built around three interacting processes, the id, the ego and the super ego.

**Id** is the unconscious reservoir of psychic energy. The other two systems operate on this psychic energy. There are two basic instincts in man — the ‘life’ or sex instinct and the ‘death’ or aggressive instinct. All the drive required by a man is derived from these two instincts.

**Id** is present at the time of birth. It does not know any morality or reality. It is concerned only with satisfaction of its wishes. It is guided by the pleasure principle.

**Ego** functions as the manager of personality. It obeys the principles of reality. It controls, selects and decides what instincts of the id are to be satisfied and in what manner it can be done.

**Super ego** works on morality principles. It represents the values of society. Human personality is the result of the interactions among these systems.
The presence of a powerful ego ensures a well-balanced personality. The dominance of super ego leads to a neurotic personality while supremacy of id over ego and super ego ends up in the development of a delinquent personality.

**Psychosexual Stages in Personality Development**

In addition to the concepts of id, ego and super ego, Freud emphasized the importance of sex in personality development. He regarded the psychic energy for sex drive as the basis of personality. So Freud explained personality development on the basis of the five stages of psychosexual development.

**Erogenous Zones.** In each stage of development a child derives pleasure by stimulating a particular area of the body. These are known as erogenous zones. The environment, however, imposes restrictions in the satisfaction of his desires. How the child manages this conflict is crucial in his personality development.

**Fixation.** Too much or too little satisfaction in any stage results in fixation. This means that personality becomes emotionally fixed at a particular stage. This is also detrimental to personality development.

According to Freud the personality of a human being is developed in five stages:

a) **Oral Stage (1st year)**

Pleasure is obtained by the stimulation of the mouth. Satisfaction at this stage lays the foundation for a man’s adult personality traits like adjustability and tenacity. If libido is fixed at this stage the personality traits developed will be fixation that results in the formation of passive personality. It is associated with over eating, smoking, drinking, or sarcastic criticism of other’s ideas.
b) **Anal Stage (2 to 3 years)**

Eliminator/ process provides the focus of pleasure. The child achieves bowel control at this stage. We can see the beginning of the development of ego in the child. If parents are too strict in teaching toilet habits, the child develops anxiety. He manifests his anxiety and anger by excreting at the most inappropriate time and place. These are the example of all kinds of expulsive traits — cruelty, destructiveness, temper tantrums, disorderliness etc. On the other hand, praise for excreting at the proper time and place makes him feel that it is an important activity. This idea lays the foundation of creativity and productivity.

A personality that developed due to anal fixation would be a stubborn, compulsively orderly personality.

c) **Phallic Stage (4-6 years)**

This is a very important period in the personality development of a person. At this stage pleasurable sensation comes from self-manipulation of genital organs. In some cases sexuality produces guilt feelings in an individual. In some other cases the adult person tries to reduce anxiety by engaging in sex.

**Oedipus Conflict**

This stage is also marked by the emergence of Oedipus conflict in children. This is a complex in which there is a strong attraction for the parent of the opposite sex and envy for the same sex parent. At the same time the child knows that it is a wrong thing. He does not want to lose the love and affection of the same sex parent. To resolve this conflict, the child tries to identify with the same sex parent. The child tries to incorporate the sexual orientation, mannerisms and values of the same sex parent.

Resolution of Oedipus complex results in the formation of super ego.
Unresolved Oedipus complex results in many problems in later marital life. Such children can never get close to their partners when they grow up nor make normal sexual relationships. A highly seductive female continues to feel guilty about sex.

Freud assumed that every person is bisexual. There is attraction towards members of the opposite sex as well as those of the same sex. This is the constitutional basis for homosexuality. In most people this instinct remains dormant while in other they are more attracted towards the persons of their own sex.

d) **Latency Period (6-12 years)**

Freud thought that sexual urges were dormant at this stage. The fact however, is that this is the stage in which a person learns to make friends with people of the same sex. So boys will make friends with other boys; the girl will be comfortable in making friends with other girls. A sexually mature person should know to be comfortable in the company of people of the same sex and of the other sex. This is a stage in which this learning takes place. The child also begins to achieve emotional independence. An increase in the knowledge about their environment enhances their ego development.

e) **Genital Stage**

This is the final stage of development. Sexual interest reawakens at this stage. There is interest in the opposite sex. Sexual attraction, socialization and planning for a vocation, marriage and family life begins at this stage.

If a person is well adjusted in the previous stages, he will be capable of establishing normal hetero-sexual relationships. Most of the sexual problems in adult life come from failure at earlier stages. There are no sharp lines dividing the different stages of development. The final
personality attained by an individual includes contribution from all stages.

**Criticisms of this Theory**
The critiques of this theory explain that Freud’s views are derived from his clinical experiences of people with disturbed personalities. It is seen that too much importance is given to sex in explaining human behaviour. Many points raised in this theory do not have empirical support. Thus the credibility of Freud’s theory is doubted. But Freud’s theory cannot be accepted and rejected as a whole. Some parts can be accepted and some parts can be rejected and some parts need revision. Freud put forward some challenging ideas that have relevance even today.

**Eric Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development**
Eric Erikson formulated his theory on personality development and called it theory on psychosocial development. In this theory human being passes through eight stages from infancy to adulthood. In each stage the person confronts a specific conflict or stressful situation, and tries to masters and resolves those challenges to move on to the next stage and deal with other challenges. When the challenges of a particular stage are not resolved adequately, they may reappear as unresolved issues or problem areas for the individual.

The eight stages as proposed by Erikson are:

1) **Basic trust versus mistrust- infant stage (birth – 1 year)**

Children begin to learn the ability to trust others based upon the consistency of the persons who takes care of them. If trust develops successfully, the child gains confidence and security in the world around him and is able to feel secure even when threatened. Unsuccessful completion of this stage can result in an inability to trust,
and therefore a sense of fear about the inconsistent world. It may result in anxiety, heightened insecurities, and a feeling of mistrust in the world around him.

2) **Autonomy versus guilt – toddler stage (1 year – 3 years)**

Children begin to assert their independence, by trying to walk on their own, refusing to do according to their mothers, choosing toy to play with on their own, and making choices about what they like to wear and to eat. If children in this stage are encouraged and supported in their increased independence, they become more confident and secure in their own ability to survive in the world. If children are criticized, too much controlled, or not given the opportunity to assert themselves, they begin to feel inadequate in their ability to survive, and may then become more dependent upon others. They may develop low self-esteem, and feel a sense of shame or doubt in their own abilities and capacities.

3) **Initiative versus guilt – early childhood (3 years – 6 years)**

Children in this stage learn to assert themselves more frequently. They begin to plan activities, make up games, and initiate activities with others. If they are given this opportunity, children develop a sense of initiative, and feel secure in their ability to lead others and make decisions. Conversely, if this tendency is not encouraged, either through criticism or control, children develop a sense of guilt. They may feel inferior to others and will therefore remain followers, lacking in self-initiative.

4) **Industry versus inferiority—middle and late childhood (6 years–puberty)**

Children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments. They initiate projects, see them through to completion, and feel good about what they have
achieved. During this time, teachers play an increasing role in the child’s development. If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and feel confident in their ability to achieve goals. If these initiatives are not encouraged, or if they are restricted by parents or teachers, then they begin to feel inferior, doubting their own abilities and therefore may not reach their full potential.

5) **Identity versus role confusion – adolescence to early adulthood**

Adolescents become more independent, and begin to look at the future in terms of career, relationships, families, housing, and other related issues. During this period, they explore possibilities and begin to form their own identity based upon the outcome of their explorations. This sense of search or exploration if restricted would result in a sense of confusion about themselves and their role in the world.

6) **Intimacy versus isolation – early to middle adulthood**

The individual begins to share more intimately with others. Relationships are explored leading toward long term commitments with someone other than a family member. Successful completion can lead to comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within the relationship. Avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression.

7) **Generativity versus stagnation – middle adulthood to late adulthood**

In this stage the individual settles down within a relationship, has a family of his own and develops a sense of being a part of a bigger society. The person also focuses considerable attention to one's career. The person also
thinks in terms of giving back to the society through raising children, being productive at work, and becoming involved in community activities and organizations. By failing to achieve these objectives, he becomes stagnant and feels unproductive.

8) **Ego integrity versus despair – late adulthood to old age**

During this stage the adults contemplate on their accomplishments and are able to develop integrity if they see themselves as leading a successful life. If they see their lives as unproductive, they experience feelings of guilt, or feel that they did not accomplish their life goals. They become dissatisfied with life and develop despair, often leading to depression and hopelessness.

**Criticism**

This theory has given an understanding of why individuals who had been thwarted in the healthy resolution of the early phases, like learning healthy levels of trust and autonomy in toddlerhood had such difficulty with the crises that come in adulthood. This theory provides answers for practical applications. It has raised new potential for therapists and their patients to identify key issues and skills that required addressing. But this theory requires a guide or measurement that could be used to assess teaching and child rearing practices in terms of their ability to nurture and facilitate healthy emotional and cognitive developments. Erikson’s theory can also be questioned as to whether his stages must be regarded as sequential, and only occurring within the age ranges he suggests. There is debate as to whether people only search for identity during the adolescent years. Does one particular stage be successfully completed before another stage could begin?
**Carl Roger's Self Theory**

Carl Rogers proposed the Self-Theory to explain personality development. Everyday and every minute, we are confronted by a number of events in our environment. How we perceive and interpret these experiences determines our behaviour.

There are two basic systems underlying Roger's personality theory— the organism and the self. These two systems are operating in the phenomenological field of an individual. Personality is the product of this interaction. Phenomenological field means the reality as experienced by an individual or it is the personal reality of the individual. The organism represents the totality of experience (conscious and unconscious). Self is the accepted awareness part of experience.

The acquirement of self-concept is a long and a continuous process. How we perceive our experience — negative or positive — depends upon our self-concept. Self-concept is developed as a result of a person’s interaction with social experience. For example, Sita's friend Rama tells her that she is beautiful and intelligent girl. Sita will internalize this compliment in her concept of herself. She will make extra effort to maintain this self-concept. Individual regulate their behaviour in order to suit the already formed self-concepts. When an individual develops a false self-image and there is inconsistency between real and imagined concepts this may result in abnormal behaviour.

A healthy personality development occurs if there is a harmonious union of one's self image and their real experience in life.

**Self-Actualization Theory**

The most well known theory on self-actualization is Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs. Maslow believed that human personality depends upon the
fulfillment of inborn potentials. He hypothesized that, within every human being the needs can be arranged in order of their importance or hierarchy, from the basic to the complex. He explained five stages of motivational fulfillment of personality development. The first stage is the most basic need to human beings and is called the physiological needs. The physiological needs include the need for food, clothing and shelter. The second stage has the safety needs. The third stage has the need for belongingness and love. The fourth stage has the self-esteem needs and at the fifth stage, the highest stage there was the need for self-actualization.

Only after the satisfaction of a need at a lower level does the next need become dominant. The satisfaction of primary needs motivates secondary needs. Every individual moves up the steps of the given hierarchy, only after satisfying the basic needs that are essential for one’s survival one can think about the higher needs. An individual who is starved for food cannot think about reforming the society. There are, however, a few exceptions. There are some people who stand for ideals, religious and social values without caring for the satisfaction of their own needs.

**Criticism**

Maslow’s need theory has received wide recognition. This theory has contributed much to the individual’s freedom, love, personal growth and values. But Maslow’s theory does not have a sound research backing. Thus this theory can be regarded as good hypotheses that are thought provoking.

**Conclusion**

This Chapter gives you an understanding on the subject of psychology. You will observe that many of the fundamental assumptions, concepts, principles, theories, methods, techniques and tools of social work are based and derived
from psychology. Psychology has rightly been defined as the positive science of human behaviour and social work practice deals with human beings. Thus it is very important for social workers to have a proper insight on psychology. Social work is practiced in various areas like school, hospital, clinics, industry, criminology and development sectors. In all these areas an understanding of the different branches of psychology are very beneficial.

Personality refers to the enduring personal characteristics of individuals. Personality development follows a cumulative continuity principle, which states that with time and age personality becomes more stable. Personality theorists favour different approaches to the study of personality. Several schools of thoughts have defined and explained personality from different perspectives. This Chapter would have broaden your understanding on some of the famous personality theories of Allport, Erikson, Freud, Carl Roger and Maslow.

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Introduction

Social psychology is that branch of psychology that is concerned with the social aspects of life of individuals—that is how persons think about and interact with each other. Every form of social thought and social behaviour of individuals in our society is included in the scope of social psychology. Man lives in the society, how he thinks and behaves are of significant importance in social psychology. The field of social psychology is an in depth enquiry into human thought and its resultant actions and behaviour thus we are able to get many an answers to questions of human love, cooperation, and helping on one hand and of prejudices, conflict and violence on the other. Research in social psychology is of great importance as it looks into the complex web of human mind in the area of understanding how and why individuals conduct, reflect and feel as they do in different social situations. Social psychology thus can be defined as a scientific study that searches to understand the nature and cause of individual behaviour and thought in different social situations. Social psychology is of considerable importance to social work practitioners as social workers are involved with human beings, so a scientific study of human behaviour and actions is extremely essential.

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Introduction to Group and Group Processes

Divya gets up in the morning gets ready for school. In the school bus she talks and discusses with her friends on the way to school. In school she has another set of friends in her class. After school, at home she has lunch, does her homework and by evening she goes out to play in the park with her friends in the neighbourhood. After play she has her bath and spends time with her grandfather, parents and brother at dinner table. This analysis of Divya’s day only shows the number of groups she is involved with. Like Divya most of us live in different group circles be it family, siblings, friends, professional circles. This only proves what the famous poet John Donne said that “no man is an island...” all of us are part of innumerable groups. Individuals belong to a number of groups and we behave in these groups in different manner. It is important to understand these different behaviour of human beings.

Individuals join a group to fulfill their needs. Firstly groups help the individuals to satisfy psychological and social needs, like giving and receiving attention, love or a sense of belonging. Second groups help individuals achieve what they cannot do themselves. Thirdly, group members often provide the individuals with knowledge and information. Fourthly, group provides security to the individuals. Fifthly, group membership also gives encouraging social identity.

Definition of Groups

A group can be defined as two or more persons who interact, with one another, share common goals are somehow interdependent, and recognize that they belong to a group. Examples of groups include a family unit, a football team, four or five college friends, ladies getting together to help children in the neighbourhood. Few elderly men regularly meeting for a morning walk. We come across a number of different groups around us.
**Features of Groups**

Groups have the following features:

- **Norms** determine appropriate behavior — implicit rules and expectations for group members to follow, like saying thank you, shaking hands.

- **Roles** that are assigned to people that determine what behaviours and responsibilities people should take up.

- A **communication structure** that determines who talks to whom within the group.

- A **power structure** that determines how much authority and influence group members have.

Example: In a school there are norms, these norms tell the students how to behave, what time they should come in, what uniform to wear. The teachers have their role includes teaching, and administering examinations. The principal has a role-to manage and coordinate the whole school. The communication structure of the class demands that students listen without talking to each other while the teacher teaches. The power structure gives the principal, teachers more authority than any of the students. Some students also may have more authority and influence than other students, such as those who are more familiar with the class material.

**Development of Groups**

Development of the group will show how the group progresses after its formation till it dies off. Many writers in their own terminology have given various stages to this group development. Here we will look into Tuckman’s stages of formation and development of groups. Tuckman has given four stages.

- **Forming** — at this stage, group members will be uncertain of the group’s structure and its goals or a strategy for achieving them; they will as a result be
quite dependent on the leader. At this stage the members get together to form a group.

- **Storming** — at this stage, conflict and disagreements between the group members and the leader will arise, as well as between various sub-groups; there will be a tendency to rebel against the rules which have been established.

- **Norming** — the group becomes more mature and cohesive; group norms develop beyond any formally established rules.

- **Performing** — conflicts between individuals are resolved; the group works constructively on problem-solving and energy is directed towards the task. The group will work together to accomplish the group goals.

Tuckman has omitted the last stage that could be called the termination stage. The termination stage is when the group ends. The group loses its existence and the group members separate themselves from being together. Not all groups will go through these stages of development, though you can probably identify them in groups which you have joined, whether formally established groups such as a committee or informal groups such as a circle of friends.

**Group Processes**

How do individuals behave in a group? What are the processes and dynamics that are unique to groups? Group process refers to all the happenings within the group, and to the interactional and communication patterns among all members or between some members of the group. Research has focused on phenomenon like group cohesion, conformity, social loafing, social facilitation, decision-making, bystander effect, deindividuation, subgroups and group conflict.
Group Cohesion and Factors Affecting it

Group Cohesion is the extent to which members of a group exhibit a desire to achieve common goals and group identity. Research tends to support the view that high interaction teams need high task cohesion to be consistently successful, whereas for moderate or low interaction teams, cohesion is less important to success. Again, we have social cohesion; the extent to which members of the group get on with one another, and task cohesion; the extent to which members cooperate to achieve the group’s goals. The following factors affect cohesion:

- **Stability**: Cohesion develops with the life of the group members being together.
- **Similarity**: Cohesion develops when there is more commonness within the group members in terms of age, sex, skills and attitudes.
- **Size**: Cohesion develops more quickly in small groups
- **Support**: Cohesive teams tend to have managers and coaches who provide support to team members and encourage them to support one another
- **Satisfaction**: Cohesion is associated with the extent to which team members are pleased with each other's performance, behaviour and conformity to the norms of the team.

Carron (1980) defined a cohesive group have the following characteristics:

- a collective identity
- a sense of shared purpose
- structured patterns of communication
Group Conformity

Conformity is the process of giving in to real or imagined pressure from a group. For example, we see groups of teenagers who display remarkable similarity in the way they dress and speak, even holding similar opinions! This demonstrates the role of group conformity. Factors that influence conformity are:

- Group size: group size influenced whether subjects conformed. The bigger the group, the more people conformed, up to a certain point. After group size reached a certain limit, conformity didn’t increase any further.

- Group unanimity: subjects were much more likely to conform when a group agreed unanimously. If even one person in the group disagreed with the group, a subject was much less likely to conform. This was true even when the other disagreed with the subject as well as the group.

Researchers have found that conformity also increases when:

- A person feels incompetent or insecure
- The person admires the group
- The group can see how the person behaves

People have many reasons for conforming:

- They want to be accepted by the group, or they fear rejection by the group. In this case, the group is exerting normative social influence.

- The group provides them with information. In this case, the group is exerting informational social influence.
They want a material or social reward, such as a pay raise or votes.

They admire the group and want to be like other group members.

**Social Loafing**

Social loafing, which contributes to declines in the productivity of a group, is the reduced effort people invest in a task when they are working with other people. Diffusion of responsibility contributes to social loafing. A person does not feel as responsible for working on a task if several others are also present, since responsibility is distributed among all those present. Imagine being assigned a project to be completed by yourself. Most likely you would complete 100% of it. Now if two people are involved, the percentage will typically not be 50/50. As more people are added to the group, you will end up with a small percentage doing a large portion of the work and a large percentage doing a much smaller proportion.

Social loafing is particularly likely to happen in the following circumstances:

- When the group is large
- When it is difficult to evaluate individual contributions to a task
- When people expect their coworkers to do most of the work

**Social Facilitation**

When alone, we tend to be more relaxed and less concerned with the outward expression of our behaviour. Add just one other person, even if we don't know that shown that our behaviour tends to change, and not always for the better. Studies have found that when others are present,
our level of arousal is increased. In other words, we are suddenly more aware of what’s going on around us. Because of this, we tend to perform better at tasks that are well learned or simple. When completing a difficult or new task, however, our performance level decreases and this phenomenon is called Social Facilitation.

Think about learning to play piano for the first time. If you are alone, you will likely be more relaxed, and better able to concentrate. When others are watching you, however, you are more likely to be self-conscious, and therefore make more mistakes. Professional piano players, however, because the task is so well learned, perform better when others are watching and they are able demonstrate their confidence and ability.

**Group Decision-Making**

Members of a group are often required to make decisions together. Three concepts related to group decision-making, are Group think, Group Polarisation and Minority Influence.

**Groupthink**

Groupthink is the tendency for a close-knit group to emphasize consensus at the expense of critical thinking and rational decision-making. In a groupthink situation, group members exert pressure to conform, disregard other opinions, suppress information from outside the group, and focus selectively on information that agrees with the group’s point of view. It can lead to impulsive decisions and a failure to identify and/or consider all sides of an argument. We often read newspaper reports of peaceful demonstrations that rapidly turn into mass riots with destruction of lives and property. These are classic examples of group decisions going bad.
Groupthink is more likely to occur when groups have certain characteristics:

- High cohesiveness. Group cohesiveness is the strength of the liking and commitment group members have toward each other and to the group.
- Isolation from outside influences
- A strong leader
- The intent to reach a major decision

**Group Polarization**

The dominant point of view in a group often tends to be strengthened to a more extreme position after a group discussion, a phenomenon called group polarization. When a group starts out with a dominant view that is relatively risky, the group is likely to come to a consensus that is even riskier. This phenomenon is called **risky shift**.

Imagine a group of protesters, all agreeing and deciding to march on the streets. You can see how this could get out of hand because opposing views (Group Think) are not considered and the push to move forward for the cause is fueled internally (Group Polarization).

**Minority Influence**

Sometimes, a committed minority viewpoint can change the majority opinion in a group. Group members are more likely to be influenced by a minority opinion when the minority holds the opinion firmly.

**Bystander Effect**

Another phenomenon is an unfortunate reality, which has been observed far to many times in groups and in larger cities. We've all heard stories of people getting robbed, or
beaten, or raped in broad daylight while people around offered no assistance. How many people rush to help an injured person on the road? We have found that the internal push to help a person in need decreases, as the group gets larger. In these situations, people tend to be followers and will only get involved if they witness another person getting involved. What results is a group of people witnessing an accident and wondering why nobody is helping. This does not occur if you are the only person witnessing the accident. If nobody else is around, a person will tend to help the victim. The more people, however, the less likely someone will offer assistance.

**Deindividuation**

There are varieties of group related, or collective phenomena such as the behaviour of crowds. When people are in a large group that makes them feel aroused and anonymous, they may experience deindividuation. A small example is that of a large group of young teenagers chasing and troubling a beggar. Each teenager on his or her own may hesitate to indulge in such actions. When people become deindividuated, they lose their inhibitions and their sense of responsibility and are not self-conscious about their behaviour. Deindividuation is associated with uninhibited and sometimes dangerous behaviour.

**Subgroups**

Subgroup formation is a common occurrence in a group situation. This dynamic has significant implications for the individual members and the total group members. The formation of subgroups and their impact on group process are varied. There are a number of factors that lead to subgroup development. Both group and individual forces contribute to subgroup formation. When individual members have similarities like similar attitudes, values, personality traits this enhance the possibility of subgroups,
members in the large group get attracted to form smaller subgroups. Group size also causes subgroup formation, larger the group more the possibility of subgroup formation. Subgroup can also be formed due to member’s discontent.

**Group Conflict**

The members in the group interact with each other. This interaction over a period of time will cause difference of opinion among the group members. This could form a threat to the group relationship. Most of the time individuals are reluctant to confront the interpersonal differences this further leads to the widening of the gap between the group members. There is a possibility that differences around issues, opinions, priorities, values and needs could escalate into group conflict. Group conflict is common, if there is a group, there will be differences this results in group conflict.

**Introduction to Leadership in Groups**

The topic of leadership in groups has been extensively discussed and analyzed by social scientist and practitioners. Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Nelson Mandela and Indira Gandhi have all been well-known political world leaders. Narayana Murthy has been ranked among the world’s most capable corporate leaders. We can also see a number of leaders in our daily life. A college president, the father of the family, the local leader in your community; all these are also examples of leaders.

The key dimensions that are often looked into in the phenomena of leadership are: the role and functions of the leader, the differential styles of leadership and the personality traits of the leader. Many theories about leadership tend to focus on these dimensions.
Leadership: Roles and Functions

The construct of roles is helpful in organizing and describing categories of behaviour that leaders are involved in helping groups to manage and harness the competitive and complementary problem-solving activities. Leaders arouse and initiate ideas, make plans, call for action, interpret and clarify member behaviour, they are exercising their functions. Leaders share feelings, encourage cooperation, foster spontaneity, negotiate differences between members, they are building up group relationships.

Leadership Theories

Trait Theories

As soon as we study the lives of people who have been called great leaders, it becomes clear that they have very different and special qualities. Like Mahatma Gandhi. Instead of starting with exceptional individuals, many turned to setting out the general qualities or traits they believed should be present. Many early studies identified personality characteristics that appear to differentiate leaders from followers. Thus trait theory professes that leaders are born, not made. Three of these characteristics stand out as important:

- Above average intelligence, but not at the level of a genius.
- Initiative – a combination of independence, inventiveness and an urge to get things done.
- Self-assurance – a blend of self-confidence, self-esteem and high personal expectations.

Behavioural Theories

In contrast, behavioural theories describe how leadership qualities can be learned from our environment – home,
educational institutions, workplaces and influences from prominent leaders in media and society. For example, a person may have been influenced by his teacher and may rise to be a great leader. We have seen in history how Adolf Hitler due to the environmental simulation became a powerful leader. Behavioural theories professes leaders are made not born.

**Leadership Style Theory**

Style theory is based on the assumption that it is the style of leadership that matters. Widely accepted leadership style theory is of Lewin who described leadership styles and behaviours.

Kurt Lewin and his colleagues (1939) identified three major leadership styles: authoritarian, participative and delegative.

**Authoritarian Leadership (Autocratic):** Authoritarian leaders provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. There is also a clear division between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group and decision-making is less creative. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Authoritarian leadership is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

**Participative Leadership (Democratic):** Participative (democratic) leadership is generally the most effective leadership style. Democratic leaders offer guidance to group members, but they also participate in the group and allow input from other group members. Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but have the final say over the decision-making process. Group
members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative.

**Delegative (Laissez-Faire):** Delegative (laissez-fair) leadership results in the least productivity. Delegative leaders offer little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to them. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation.

**Introduction to Social Attitudes**

Rohan saw a beggar on the roadside, he could not resist himself and he took out a coin from his pocket and gave it to the old woman. Rohan knew that in India giving alms to the beggars was an illegal offence but he had always seen his grandmother very sympathetic to the needy and he too has a sympathetic attitude towards the needy. We see that Rohan has an attitude here towards the old woman beggar. We constantly form and use attitudes. We talk about the need for people to change their attitude. A schoolteacher may speak about some students having an attitude problem. We all express a variety of attitudes about a variety of topics. For example, Jenefir may have a negative attitude towards smoking and speak positively about the need for reservations for women in parliament.

**Definition of Social Attitudes**

Attitudes help people to understand their social world. They help us define how we perceive and think about others, as well as how we behave toward them. Many definitions exist that attempt to determine what exactly an attitude is. A widely accepted definition describes attitudes as evaluations of various objects that are stored in memory. An attitude includes affect (a feeling), cognition (a thought), and behaviour (an action). An attitude can
also be defined as a psychological readiness that prompts a person to behave or react to certain objects. Social psychologist has conducted a lot of research on this topic as attitudes strongly influence the social thoughts of the individuals and this in turn affects the behaviour of the individual.

**Formation of Attitudes**

Most psychologists believe that attitudes are learned through exposure, conditioning, and socialization. Specifically, attitudes can be acquired from others (social learning) in the form of classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning, and modeling; as well as being acquired via direct experience.

Social Learning often referred to as “socialization” refers to the gradual acquisition of language, attitudes, and other socially approved values through reinforcement, observation, and other learning processes. This implies that one’s interaction with others, such as parents, teachers, peers, relatives, newspapers, books, television, religious groups, etc., can affect our attitudes toward various objects. This type of “learning” of attitudes occurs in diverse ways described below.

**Classical conditioning** is a learning-through-association process, which involves the pairing of stimuli. “When one stimulus regularly precedes another, the one that occurs first may soon become a signal for the one that occurs second” (Baron & Byrne, 1994). After frequent pairings, there exists an expectation that when the first stimulus occurs, the second will then follow. Consider for example, a machine that emits a loud noise just before it breaks down. Over time, the loud noise may serve as a signal to the unpleasant occurrence. Attitudes can be conditioned in this way as well. This can occur when an attitude object is frequently paired with other objects or experiences that are pleasant or unpleasant.
**Instrumental Conditioning.** Rewards and punishments are commonly used to accomplish goals. Skinner (1975) theorized that whenever responses are immediately followed by positive reinforcers (rewards), these responses become more frequent in the future. In contrast, punished responses become less frequent. These same techniques are often utilized (either consciously or unintentionally) to form attitudes.

**Modeling.** This third process of forming attitudes often occurs without intention. This process often referred to as “Social Learning Theory” suggests that behaviours and attitudes are acquired by observing and imitating the actions displayed by parents and peers (Bandura, 1969).

**Direct Experience.** Finally, attitudes can be acquired from the mere exposure to a particular object. Such direct experience, repeated over time, often results in a preference for that object when compared to objects less often encountered. For example a daughter who see her mother as a working lady will also easily follow that practice and be economically independent.

**Attitude Change**

Attitudes are rigid and it is a challenge to change attitudes but social workers must take up this challenge and work for attitudinal change. Information and knowledge can bring in attitudinal change in the society. Information is available from many sources on a continuous basis. Often this information is presented in an attempt to influence behaviour. Advertisements, commercials, speeches and the like are designed to change attitudes toward a given product, issue, or idea. Mass media through their widespread communication can influence the public to change their attitudes and form new attitudes. Mass media be it the print media or the televisions have made the public aware on various issues like the problem of spread of HIV.
Regular information in the mass media has brought in attitudinal change towards the diseases. New information on various issues can educate the society. Correct, factual information can influence individuals to change their attitudes. For examples some parents in India have an attitude that their girl child must be married off early. This results in child marriage even today. These parents need to be educated to the status of girl child that if promoted a girl child can rise in life and be economically independent and be a more productive member of the family and society. The parents also need to be told of the ill effects (psychological and biological effects) of child marriage on the girl child.

Attitudinal change can also be brought about by exposing individuals to external influences. For example when after India’s independence the great Indian freedom fighter Vinobaji talked of ‘bhoodan’, he was able to motivate the rich to give up land for the poor landless Indian. It became a social movement many Indian gave up their property to the poor. Opinion leaders can also work towards attitudinal change. Thus local leaders who have a close interaction with the general public could be involved to bring in attitude change to improve the community.

It has also been observed that bringing in social legislation can also force the society for attitudinal change. Social legislation needs to be combined with awareness and information on the issue so that the legislation is implemented properly. For example Pre- Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique Act, 1994 legislation is a ban for sex determination test when the child is in womb. This act was passed to protect the girl child in the womb. This act has controlled the killing of female feticides. The legislation is a step towards attitudinal change, parents need to stop the preference for the boy child and protect the girl child, as this is a crime and will have serious consequences on our society.
Resistance to Attitude Change

Resistance to persuasive attempts is affected by a number of factors such as reactance, forewarning, and selective avoidance and exposure. These concepts function to assist in the stabilization of one’s attitudes. If individuals were susceptible to every attempt at persuasion, attitudinal change would be continuous because of the great number of persuasive messages encountered daily.

Reactance
This is both an emotional and cognitive reaction that individuals experience when obvious attempts are made at persuasion. When one’s freedom to choose is threatened or eliminated, individuals strive to regain a feeling of autonomy. This often results in attitudes being changed in the opposite direction to that being suggested (Brehm, 1966). For example, parent forcefully restrict television viewing by children, reactance can occur. Children will probably desire to spend more time watching television.

Forewarning
Advance knowledge of someone’s attempt at persuasion often results in the receiver forming counter-arguments prior to the message (Cialdini & Petty, 1979). This allows the receiver to be forearmed with relevant facts and information to assist in the resistance of attitude change. If children expect their father’s objection, they are likely to be ready with a long list of reasons why they should watch more television.

Selective Avoidance and Exposure
This protection against persuasion involves the process of attention that is given to new information that refuses or supports one’s original attitude. This theory of information processing suggests that there exists a tendency to direct attention away from information that challenges existing
attitudes and to give increased attention to information that supports held beliefs (Baron & Byrne, 1994). Children may then ignore information from their father about negative effects of television and may give reasons why television watching is so important to them.

**Introduction to Prejudice, Discrimination and Stereotypes**

Prejudice literally means pre-judgement. The judgement is passed even before looking into the details, this pre-judgement because it’s unscientific, illogical and baseless thus it has to be wrong. Prejudice is an attitude where the attitude object is a social group. This attitude has been defined as a negative bias or disliking of people because they belong to a particular group. The group is often an ethnic, racial, or other social category. This is the most widely researched attitude. Some of the prejudice observed in our society was against Jews in Nazi Germany or the caste system in India.

A related but different concept, *discrimination*, has also been widely studied. Discrimination refers to negative action toward individuals for whom we hold prejudicial attitudes. Thus, discrimination stems from prejudices. However, not all prejudices result in discriminatory actions. Prejudice like attitudes consists of an affective and cognitive component, while discrimination serves as the behavioural component.

*Stereotypes* are beliefs about people based on their membership in a particular group. Stereotypes can be positive, negative, or neutral. Stereotypes based on gender, ethnicity, or occupation are common in many societies.

Stereotypes have several important functions:
- They allow people to quickly process new information about an event or person.
Basic Social Science Concepts

- They organize people past experiences.
- They help people to meaningfully assess differences between individuals and groups.
- They help people to make predictions about other people’s behaviour.

Stereotypes can lead to distortions of reality for several reasons:
- They cause people to exaggerate differences among groups.
- They lead people to focus selectively on information that agrees with the stereotype and ignore information that disagrees with it.
- They tend to make people see other groups as overly homogeneous, even though people can easily see that the groups they belong to are heterogeneous.

**Formation of Prejudice**

Several theories and perspectives provide insight as to why prejudice occurs.

**Psychological Theories**

Psychological contributions include the concept of ego-defense. This theory suggests that some people feel threatened and uncertain about their own worth. Because of this, they reject people unlike themselves.

Another psychological source of prejudice stems from the belief that people will blame frustration and setbacks on others. This “scapegoating” can be a way of venting frustrations.

**Economic Theories**

Perhaps the oldest explanation of prejudice involves the Realistic Conflict Theory. This theory claims that prejudice
is a result of competition between groups for limited resources such as territory, wealth, status, etc.

**Social Learning Theories**

The formation of prejudices can also involve the interpersonal processes of social learning and modeling of others behaviour as well as the accepting the norms of society. Society tell us many do’s and donot’s.

**Social Identity Theory**

This theory attempts to explain within group bias or favoritism, maintaining that self-esteem and identity is derived from group membership and group success. Sometimes poor relations between groups occur simply because there are two groups, This occurs wherein people find out they are members of one of two groups that have been defined in a trivial and arbitrary way. They will favour members of their own group over members of the other group.

**Cognitive Theories**

Cognitive causes of prejudice stem from the tendency for people to categorize others into groups; particularly groups of “us” and “them”. This categorization is then affected by several biases and errors.

- **Ingroup-Outgroup Bias** is the idea that we favour our own group, its members, and products and reject the out-group, its members, and its products.

- **Outgroup Homogeneity Bias** is the assumption that all members of the out-group possess similar characteristics and are therefore “all alike”. We also often engage in biased information processing, seeing those aspects of other groups that confirm our stereotypes and failing to see facts that are inconsistent with them.
• **Ingroup Differentiation Bias** is the opposite assumption, namely that the in-group is composed of members who possess unique and distinctive qualities. Distinctive groups (minority) tend to be associated with distinctive behaviours. This sort of paired distinctiveness results in our attributing properties to groups that are illusory.

• **Extremity Bias** suggests that we make more extreme judgements about people in the out-group. The law of Small Numbers states that we base judgements about another group based on observations of a small number of individuals from that group, this is mainly because there is lack of exposure to that group.

• **Group Attribution Error** asserts that we base judgments about individuals on the general characteristic of the group and often hold the group responsible for the behaviour of the individuals. Finally, stereotypes are developed as a result of these cognitive processes.

• **Self-fulfilling Prophecies** may be unknowingly created wherein we apply stereotypes to members of outgroups and then behave toward them in such a way as to bring out the very behaviours that fit our stereotypes.

The existence of prejudice in society a result of a combination of factors and the interaction of the different factors cause this negative attitudinal called prejudice.

**Prejudice can be Changed**

Prejudice attitudes are formed due to the interaction of complex factors, this prejudices can also be removed, for the improved of our society.

1) Psychological approaches suggest the use of therapy to deal with the ego-defensiveness and scapegoating.
Individuals need to work on their low self-esteem. Improved self-esteem will reduce prejudice among groups.

2) Cognitive approaches offer the tactics of finding ways to undo categorization. By removing the boundary between “us” and “them”, people may find they have things in common with the previous “out-group”. Knowledge of the cognitive bias processes may assist in reducing prejudice. Research that reduces stereotypes and biases will form the base of removing the discriminations.

3) Interpersonal approaches involve the formal and informal teaching of equality and multiculturalism, in the home, school, social, and media settings.

4) Finally, the increased opportunity for contact and exposure through cooperative settings will help reduce inter-group prejudice. For example students in an exchange programme between hostile countries will be benefited by encouraging them to be exposed to each others cultures that will reduce their negativity which many a time steps in from ignorance.

Conclusion
This Chapter has dealt with social psychology concepts, which are extremely important to social workers. The first section gives us an understanding of groups and group processes. Most of our daily interactions and activities occur in the group settings. Individuals think and behave differently in different groups. This unit has discussed various phenomena that occur in groups like group cohesion, group conformity, social loafing, social facilitation, group decision making and others. The knowledge of these phenomena will help in understanding why individual behaves differently in the group situations.
The second section deals with leadership another key concept that is beneficial to be understood by social workers. A brief review of leadership theories indicates there are no simple answers to what makes some leaders more effective than others.

The third section describes the concept of attitudes and prejudice. How these are formed and how prejudice results in discriminations in our society. It is very essential for social workers to reduce and remove the negative attitudes present in our society that chain our society from progressing. Prejudices need to be eliminated from our society so that we have an equal society where discriminations between the different sections of our society are minimized.

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8
Social Learning and Motivation

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Introduction
This Chapter is broadly covering two very important aspects of psychology – social learning and motivation. These are the basic and yet highly dynamic and multifarious concepts that influence personality in a significant manner. There is no dearth of literature in psychology on these subjects that impact every human being’s life.

To a layman, learning may mean acquiring knowledge through a formal setting like schools or colleges. However, psychologists understand it as a continuous, life-long process and it covers practically every information that we acquire to live a life – survival strategies, coping strategies, values, norms, role expectations, skills, knowledge and so on. It is an integral part of socialization and social life. Social learning is a relatively permanent change in the behaviour of a person as a result of experience or due to practice. Many eminent psychologists have given different perspectives and theories related to social learning which would be dealt with in the following sections. Learning and memory are intricately related and the stages of memory also reflect the depth of learning. In the same way, learning goes hand in hand with performance, which is an integral part of behaviour.

The other concept motivation is equally vital. It is the intrinsic driving force, the intention to carry out a particular

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activity. It refers to the driving and pulling forces that result in persistent behaviour directed towards set goals, desires and aspirations. Motivation has been taken as initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour. It is very basic to everyday life and includes our hunger, thirst, relief from pain and suffering, aspiration to be appreciated by others, to influence others, to have prestige, power and so on. Motivation can be intrinsic as well as extrinsic. Motivation has main dimensions like biological and/or social. Experiments have shown that biological motives such as hunger, thirst and sex are driven or regulated by the hypothalamus (a part of human brain) and various hormones in the body. Social motives may include need for affiliation, power and prestige, to mention a few.

Apart from the biological motives, motivation has been categorized into social as well as psychological components. Several theories have been postulated to describe various dimensions of motivation such as the Maslow's theory, drive theory, opponent process theory and the like. There are theories stating that humans are motivated to behave in ways to maintain an optimal level of arousal. Motivation is undoubtedly interplay of different and numerous intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

**Social Learning**

It is often maintained that human behaviour is ‘learnt’. Through the process of socialization we learn innumerable things about our culture, language, customs, role expectations, values, mores, attitudes, beliefs, mental images about ourselves and others that in turn become an integral part of our personality. In fact, learning is basic to human life as it enables the persons to adapt to their environment. The term ‘social learning’ was coined by Neil Miller and John Dollard (1941). It is defined as any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice or experience. The definition signifies
that learning is essentially ‘a change in behaviour’ of an individual. However, learning does not always have positive connotation, it can be faulty and mal-adaptive. Further, the change in behaviour is relatively permanent and not momentary. Permanent, here, does not mean essentially life-long but nevertheless long lasting. Learning may be a conscious attempt and we also learn many things unconsciously.

**How Learning Takes Place**

Many psychologists and social scientists have experimented in this direction and one of the most prominent one is by Ivan Pavlov in late 1890s commonly known as classical conditioning or Pavlovian conditioning. In the beginning of his experiment, he noted that dog did not salivate with the ringing of the bell. Then shortly after ringing of the bell (Conditioned Stimulus), food was presented to the dog (Unconditioned Stimulus) and it salivated (Unconditioned Response). This sequence was repeated many times. Pavlov noted that with the ringing of the bell dog salivated (even when food was not presented), which was a learnt behaviour – a Conditioned Response. From this experiment, it may be inferred that conditioned stimulus becomes a signal for the unconditioned stimulus. Therefore, when a conditioned stimulus is presented, the unconditioned stimulus is expected and the learner responds in accordance with the learned expectation.

Further, if conditioned stimulus alone is presented many times, without the unconditional stimulus, the likelihood of conditioned response gradually decreases and finally gets extinguished [Dog salivated with ringing of bell as it learnt that after ringing of bell food comes. When many times food was not presented after ringing of bell, the dog stopped salivating – it is called **extinction**]. Thus, if learning does not remain ‘useful’, it may be un-learned.
Added to this, experiments have, beyond doubt, proved that re-conditioning or re-learning can also take place.

The next noteworthy model of learning given by B. F. Skinner (1935) is popularly known as Instrumental or operant conditioning. In his experiments, Skinner found that a rat, after a few hit and trials came to know that by pressing bar, it would get food and following that whenever rat felt hungry, it pressed the bar. It shows that a response that results in positive outcome or reinforcement is more likely to be repeated. Thus, it may be inferred that an environmental event that is the consequence of an instrumental response and that makes that response more likely to occur again is known as a reinforcer or a reinforcement.

**Reinforcement**

Reinforcement can be positive as well as negative. A **positive reinforcer** would be a stimulus which when followed by a response, increases the likelihood of that response. To exemplify, a child getting patting and appreciation when she finishes her food properly, would tend to repeat the same behaviour that is finishing food properly, in future too. On the other hand, a **negative reinforcer** would be an event or stimulus or event which, when its cassation or termination is contingent on a response, increases the likelihood that the response will occur again. For instance, a child is fearful to enter his friend’s house because he was scared of the dog staying there. Dog’s absence from friend’s home would increase the likelihood that child would freely go there. Further, a punisher is a stimulus, which when occurs, reduces the likelihood of the associated response. For example, a child steals his classmate’s pencil box, gets punishment for that behaviour, he would less likely to repeat the same behaviour again in future.
Modeling and Observational Learning

Next, significant theoretical proposition of Modeling or Observational learning was given by Albert Bandura. Along with Richard Walters and other social psychologists, Bandura, through their experiments propounded that observation and modeling are vital means of learning. They discussed the learning of social behaviours like aggression by watching and imitating those one is exposed to. They showed that people could learn to imitate without direct reinforcement. However, whether that learning would be translated into behavioural disposition, would depend on reinforcement(s) given. Let us take an example, a child picked up abusive words from the movie he was watching on television. He used those words while conversing with his elder brother and received bashing from the brother. This punishment decreased the likelihood of usage of those words in his behaviour in future. Thus, learning took place but not got reinforced.

Cognitive Learning

Cognitive Learning is another important form of learning, which is different than the earlier two Stimulus-Response based associations. In cognitive learning links are made among various stimuli so that stimulus-stimulus associations are learnt. Koffka, Kohler, Lewin, Piaget, Ausubel, Bruner, Gagne have been pivotal in propounding this model. Cognition means the processing of information about the environment that is received through the senses.

Morgan et al. (1993) describe the process of cognition as:
1) selection of information,
2) making of alterations in the selected information,
3) the association of items of information with each other,
4) the elaboration of information in thought,
5) the storage of information in memory and when needed,

6) the retrieval of stored information.

Thus, cognitive learning would mean change in the way the information is processed, which is then stored in the memory for future use. A person or animal develops cognitive maps of information gained from the environment and makes use of it at appropriate time. Most of our academic learning falls in this category. Cognitive learning further includes latent learning, insight learning and imitation, details of these are as follows:

**Latent Learning:** the meaning of the word latent is ‘hidden’ and this type of learning is not reflected in the behaviour immediately but until later when conditions for its appearance are favourable. For example, a child learnt to use bottle opener by observing his father doing it, he might not immediately make use of this but may do so in future.

**Insight Learning:** in this type of learning, a problem is posed, a period follows when apparently no progress is made, and then the solution comes suddenly. You have experienced this kind of learning in solving puzzles, where you apply previously learnt knowledge to newer stimuli.

**Learning and Memory**

In the last section you learnt about some popular principles of learning. In this section, we would pay attention to a related concept – Memory – defined as encoding, storage and retrieval of what was learnt earlier. Encoding process involves receiving sensory input and transforming message (input) into a code or form which can be stored. Storage process puts this coded information into memory. Retrieval process covers gaining access to this coded and stored information, when needed.
Learning is intricately related to memory as what is learnt is observable by what is remembered. Hence memory is of vital importance in the process of learning and re-learning. Memory can be of short term or long term. Short term memory is one that can hold information received through sensory register (storage function of sensory channels to hold information for a very brief span of time) for about 30 seconds while long term memory may last for days, months, years or even a life-time depending on many intrinsic-extrinsic factors. When we talk about memory, it is usually the long term memory. In this, information is organized, categorized, classified like a library system. Long term memory is divided into semantic memory (that is, rules, meanings for using language) and episodic memory (remembrance of events that have happened in life and that carry significance for us).

Many theories have been put forth regarding types of memories and information processing theories saliently believe in memorizing process into various steps or stages. In this regard, the Atkinson-Shiffrin information processing theory propounds that the stages in which short term memory is converted into long term memory are – (i) very brief storage of incoming information in a sensory register; (ii) transfer of some part of this information into short term memory; and (iii) rehearsals and information transfer from short term memory to long term memory.

**Forgetting**

Further, we know that we do not tend to remember a lot of things and forgetting is quite common phenomenon. In fact, forgetting refers to the apparent loss of information already encoded and stored in long term memory. There can be numerous reasons for forgetting – lack of attention may lead to inadequate encoding, poor rehearsals or even failure to reach to long term memory from short term
memory. Further, without appropriate retrieval cues, the sought-for items stored in long-term memory may not be found, that is forgetting occurs. Another significant reason of forgetting, often termed as motivated forgetting is explained by Freud as person’s emotional unhappiness attached with that information and hence repression, defence mechanism is utilized (Details of defence mechanisms are given in the next unit of this Block).

**Amnesia**

Next, Amnesia is an overwhelming memory deficit either due to loss of what has been stored or inability to form new memories. It may have biological reasons as caused by brain malfunctioning. Alcoholism, drug abuse may induce short term amnesia. Alzheimer’s disease and senile dementia, more common in old age, are primarily due to death of certain brain cells. Though learning disabilities and faulty memory functions may seem highly technical issues, it affects the social functioning of the persons concerned.

**Learning: Translating Knowledge Into Practice**

You may wonder how the information provided in this unit about learning process and memory would be useful to you as social worker in the field. This section would give you an insight in this regard.

Through learning people develop coping strategies and, at times, these coping strategies may further lead to mal-adaptation. This faulty learning or mal-adaptation is reflected in behaviours like physical, verbal, mental abuse, aggression, hostility, coercion, bullying, self-destruction tendencies, withdrawal, delinquency, and so on and so forth. Person may come in conflict with self, with family members, with neighbours and peers, school, workplace and other systems in the social environment. All such mal-
adaptive behaviours provide the scope of social work intervention, at the preventive, curative, management and promotive levels. Settings may be schools, colleges, families, workplace, community, youth clubs, Mahila Mandals, hospitals and health care centres, family counselling/ family welfare organizations, child guidance centres, to mention a few.

Social workers have remained an integral part of the interdisciplinary team where family therapy, group therapy, behaviour therapy and behaviour modifications form the part of intervention in which methods are developed to alleviate psychological disorders which focus on changing behavioural problems by using techniques of classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and observational learning.

**Learning or Conditioning**

The basic assumption in behavioural modifications and behavioural therapies is that the psychological problems that come about through learning or conditioning can be undone via the same processes. For instance, in instrumental conditioning, we have seen that the behaviour that is rewarded tends to be repeated whereas the behaviour that goes unrewarded has less probability of recurrence. So, behaviours that seem maladaptive or abnormal are assumed to follow the same rule: they persist because they have been rewarded in some way, they should be reduced or eliminated if they are made less rewarding.

Instrumental conditioning approaches emphasize the role of reinforcement in establishing and maintaining unwanted behaviour. The behaviourists make use of functional analysis of behaviour that explains which behaviour can be changed (say, stressed out person smokes for coping), then positive and negative reinforcers are identified.
Adequate reinforcers and token economies (people earn objects or tokens which they can exchange for desirable items, services and token is given to the client whenever he/she exhibits desirable response), punishment (rarely used), etc., are used to design behavioural modification intervention.

Classical conditioning techniques rely on pairing of conditioned and unconditioned stimuli as the basis for therapeutic learning. Many techniques like systematic desensitization (aversive stimuli are broken down into lesser degree of anxiety/tension and presented in a sequential way. For example, a child fearful of darkness would be encouraged to go first with adult to dark place, then alone to a bright place, with gradual dimming of lights to the level of darkness, which was earlier an aversive stimulus), flooding (in this, client is exposed to the stimuli which arouse fear over and over again based on the principle of extinction. To exemplify, exposing a person who fears height to elevators, hill-tops, etc.,) and aversive therapy (in this, stimuli eliciting the behaviour to be eliminated is paired with unpleasant states of affairs and in time, these stimuli tend to be avoided).

Observational Learning

Modeling therapies use observational learning as their principal means of inducing change. This may include participant modeling, which are quite effective in certain phobias. Client’s feeling of personal efficacy plays a crucial role in success of these types of therapies. Bandura also explained that observation and modeling of aggressive behaviour in the family, neighbourhood and media is making many children violent and overtly aggressive. Children of physically punitive parents tend to use similar aggression when relating to others. Within families, violence often leads to violence. Similarly, the social
environment where ‘macho’ images are admired, aggression is readily transmitted to young children. Television also offers a much wider range of violent models. Watching programmes with contents of violence would increase aggressiveness and violence among children. To counteract, modeling should be set right – parents should learn right way of handling frustration and aggression, television programmes need to be checked for unsought for contents on aggression and violence.

Further, cognitive therapy, often known as cognitive restructuring is an approach that maintains that maladaptive behaviour comes from mal-adaptive ideas and the therapy should focus on changing these ideas. For example, information about the harmful effects of smoking and futility of its apparent relevance as stress-buster may automatically lead to giving up smoking.

**Motivation**

Many of you have joined this course and reading the material because you want to be a good social worker, or want a job along with satisfaction and contentment of serving the society. Some of your friends/relatives may aspire to become doctor, engineer, charted accountant, get married to a beautiful/smart, intelligent, loving, caring person. In every day life, we observe many intentions — a patient may want quick recovery, a desperate unemployed youth wanting job, a child looking forward for his birthday party, a frail elderly wanting to get rid of life — all these are motives, the driving force that influence our action and behaviour.

This driving and pulling force that results in persistent behaviour directed towards particular goals is termed as motivation. To understand Motivation better, Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) have defined it as
— an internal state or condition that activates behaviour and gives it direction;
— a desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behaviour;
— an influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behaviour.

It is the prime force that leads us towards our daily life, short term as well as long term goals. We cannot directly observe motivation, but their existence is felt in our commitment, conviction, persistence and perseverance to achieve goals. Motives are reflected through our behaviour. Motivation is quite a dynamic concept and is a dominant instrument that explains the behaviour and even predicts future behaviours.

**Biological and Psychological Motives**

Motives can be biological and/or psychological. The biological motives, to a large extent, are rooted in the physiological state of the body, examples of which are hunger, thirst, sleep, pain avoidance and desire for sex. Many of the biological motives are considered as triggers to maintain homeostasis or equilibrium among many internal physiological processes. This homeostasis is highly crucial for survival – food, water, optimum temperature, are needed so that the body can perform vital functions needed to remain alive. We feel hungry or hunger motivation is initiated when blood levels or rates of use of nutrient substances fall below a certain set point. Likewise, we feel thirsty when cellular dehydration and decrease in volume of blood is reported to hypothalamic osmoreceptors. Sexual motivation is a controversial topic as some scientists maintain that it is physiological drive while others consider that external stimuli and learning also play a significant role in eliciting this drive rather than merely the sex hormones.
Social Motives

Further, social motives may broadly be covered under need for achievement, need for power and need for creative expression. The need for achievement is a motive to accomplish things and to be successful in performing tasks. People high in need for achievement prefer to work on moderately challenging and risky tasks which promise success and on tasks where their performance can be compared with the performance of others. Likewise, power motivation is a social motive in which the goals are to influence, control, persuade, lead, charm others and enhance one’s own reputation in the eyes of others. The behavioural expression of power motivation takes many forms, among them, impulsive and aggressive action, participation in competitive sports, the collection of possessions, association with people who are not particularly popular, the choice of occupation which have high impact on others, and the building of disciplining of the body. Among men it also takes form of drinking and sexual domination of women. A special form of power motivation, termed Machiavellianism, is characteristic of people who express their power motivation by exploiting others in a deceptive and unscrupulous fashion.

Motivation Process

Motivation process is not as simple as it seems to be. You may wonder if this driving force is behind every goal and intention, then why most of the desires, goals, and intentions remain unfulfilled. Many people in the world fail to meet the basic survival needs, unemployment and under-employment are rampant. Safety, security, affection, affiliation also remain unfulfilled needs in majority of cases. There may be lack of perseverance and persistence or presence of conflicting goals that often create hurdles in realizing out set targets which in turn creates frustration.
Thus, if motives are blocked, people may feel depressed, fearful, anxious, angry, guilty or frustrated.

There are primarily three reasons why people feel frustrated over unfulfilled needs and goals: one, certain environmental forces may block motive fulfillment; two, there may be personal inadequacies that get in the way of reaching to the goals; and three, there may be conflicts between and among various motives.

**Environmental obstacles** may be any external stimuli – locked door, lack of money, people in the social environment like parents, friends, spouse, children, police, government officials – to mention a few. Lack of money to study further, parental refusal to study abroad, welfare officials not releasing pension of aged persons on time are some of the situations that make persons involved frustrated because of environmental factors.

**Personal shortcomings** also obstruct fulfillment of goals and desires, which are mostly socially learnt. For example, a mediocre student failing to clear medical or engineering entrance test, a child not being able to perform dance was not involved in stage performance in which all his other friends are participating – these situations undoubtedly lead to frustration and despair.

**Motivation Conflicts**

Motivational Conflicts are the major source of frustration in which expression of one motive interferes with expression of other motives. For instance venting out pent up emotions through aggression and fear of social disapproval are the conflicting motives which are quite common. Motivational Conflicts can be of following types:

a) Approach-approach conflict: it is a conflict between two positive goals, which are equally attractive at the same time. A working lady who wants to give proper
time to her kids and at the same time wants her career graph to shoot up faces such kind of dilemma.

b) Avoidance-avoidance conflict: it is conflict between two negative goals. The example can be: a working lady, the sole earner of the household, may have to continue with her job she dislikes a lot or else face the consequences of losing only livelihood option.

c) Approach-avoidance conflict: in this a person is both attracted and repelled by the same goal object. In this, because of the positive valence of the goal, the person approaches it but as it is approached, the negative valence becomes stronger and the person stops before reaching the goal. To exemplify, a lady wants to get married to a man she loves but she would have to leave her job as he stays in other city. In this case, she wants to get married as it would bring stability to her life but at the same time she does not want to give up her job that provides her status, freedom, creative satisfaction and worthiness. Further, a multiple approach-avoidance conflicts would involve several goals with positive and negative valence.

**Theories of Motivation**

Theories of motivation give us a general set of guidelines and principles to increase our understanding of factors involved in motivation that reflect our dreams and desires, aspirations and goals. Many theories have been put forth to discuss the intriguing phenomenon called motivation, salient ones are as follows:

**Drive Theory**

Drive theory is also known as ‘push theory of motivation’. It says that when an internal driving state is aroused, the individual is pushed to engage in behaviour, which will
lead to a goal that reduces the intensity of the driving state. The motivation process is in a cyclic fashion which is comprised of the stages as follows: (1) a driving state (2) the goal directed behaviour initiated by the driving state (3) the attainment of appropriate goal and (4) the reduction of the driving state and subjective satisfaction and relief when the goal is reached. Physiological motives are the best examples— we feel hungry, take food from the kitchen, eat it, feel satisfied and after a few hours hunger pangs again erupt.

**Incentive Theory**

In contrast to push theory, this incentive theory is also known as pull theory as the goal objects pull the desired behaviour of people towards them. The goal objects that motivate behaviour are called incentives. An important characteristic of this theory is that individuals expect pleasure from the attainment of positive incentives and from avoidance of what are known as negative incentives. In everyday life our social behaviour is more often driven by this kind of motivation. Salaries, perks motivate us and demotion, punishment due to non-compliance to timelines are negative incentives.

**Opponent-process Theory**

This theory takes the hedonistic view of motivation and is based on pleasure-pain principle. It maintains that we are motivated to seek goals, which give us good emotional feelings, and to avoid those resulting in displeasure and pain. Let us take an example: A lady working in the office received a phone call that her husband has met a severe accident. She was terrified and rushed to hospital. Throughout the way, she was crying and all kinds of worst negative thoughts wandered in her mind. On reaching hospital, she found that her husband escaped with minor scratches. She had a sigh of relief and then was elated.
that everything is fine. You may analyze whole range of emotions from extreme fear, grief to relief and elation experienced by the lady in the example.

**Optimum Level Theory**

This theory is also known as ‘just right theory’. It maintains that there is a certain optimum level of arousal that is pleasurable is maintained. Stated differently, the individual is motivated to behave in such a way as to maintain the optimum level of arousal. If the arousal is too low the person would seek external stimuli to increase level of arousal while if it is too high, behaviour will be directed towards decreasing it. For example, after a very hectic day, you may just relax switching off mobile phones and closing door, while if you have nothing significant to do, you may search something in the environment to engage yourself such as watching television, visiting a friend.

**Maslow’s Need Hierarchy and Motivation**

Maslow postulated five levels of hierarchy of needs — **physiological or survival needs** (hunger thirst and sex), **safety needs** (need for security, stability and order), **belongingness and love needs** (such as need for affection, affiliation and identification), **esteem needs** (such as need for prestige, success and self respect) and the **need for self actualization** (individual’s needs to develop his/her own potentials). He maintains that when the lower level needs, that is, the basic needs (survival and safety) are met, the individual is motivated to fulfill higher level needs. The levels of needs are often depicted in the form of a ladder reflecting the sequential fulfillment of needs from below (survival needs) to the top (self actualization needs).

From the time a child is born, motivation plays an important role in sustaining and promoting growth. Lack of motivation may result in and detrimental to the very
aspect of living. Motivation can be intrinsic (in this, individuals participate in an activity for their own enjoyment) or extrinsic (individuals look outside for rewards). A mother playing with her child is intrinsically motivated while a lady running a crèche for making money is extrinsically motivated.

**Relevance of Motivation in Social Work Practice**

Motivation acts like a fuel that drives us to achieve our goal objects. There are many situations that call for social work intervention vis-à-vis motivation. Let us examine some of these factors in some detail:

When there is conflict between various motives, the social worker may provide better insight to the clients by any of the following ways:

- Giving additional information about varied choices. For example, group worker providing choices to group members on recreational activities they can take up, with pros and cons of each.

- Helping clients to know their own values and preferences, which, at times, may not form the part of conscious self. This would enable them to make choices in consonance with their inner drive and value system, reducing chances of choosing the wrong option. It may seem a simple task, but its applicability is widespread. For example, social worker helping a housewife to make a decision to accept or reject a job offer, after analyzing her level of achievement motivation and her preference for home or career.

Networking with many agencies for skill/knowledge upgradation of clients who fail to achieve their goals because of personal shortcomings is another task. Social worker arranging for remedial classes for first generation learners would be an example in this regard.
Another significant area of intervention is helping clients cope with frustration arising out of failure to achieve set objectives. Suicidal tendencies, drug addiction, alcoholism, aggression, violence are all the forms of faulty coping with frustration due to unfulfilled motives. Enabling adolescents learn positive ways of dealing with examination related stress and frustration is one of the numerous instances that require social work ‘help’. Social work intervention can be at preventive, curative as well as promotive levels.

Motivation is one of the prime tasks carried out by social workers in almost all the social situations. As caseworker, social worker studies the motives of his/her clients and takes needful steps to maintain desired level of motivation among the clients and target groups to bring about needed change in their social environment and social functioning. Group worker encourages and facilitates and, in turn, motivates group members to achieve the set objectives. Community organizer seeks people’s participation and ensures that community folk collaborate and cooperate to achieve common goals. This also calls for maintaining optimum level of motivation among the community people. Social actionist increases the motivation level of people of disadvantaged section of population to mobilize themselves to raise voice against injustice. Motivation forms the crux of all the interactional activities carried out by the social worker.

Further, social workers play vital role in staff-motivation not only in social welfare organizations and human service delivery organizations but also corporate bodies, industries and other workplaces. As school social workers, medical social officers, welfare officers and human resource managers, social workers consciously make use of the theoretical framework of motivation to enhance work efficiency and commitment among people at work place. Dealing with burn-outs, lack of motivation, sustaining
interest and conviction, especially in human service delivery have been crucial tasks of social workers.

After this, generalized overview, let us look at specific targeted interventions where social workers. Opponent process theory describes emotion led motivation stages. This learning is useful in aggression management among clients. Machiavels (power-motivated people expressing behaviours of exploitation and deception, hostility and violence) also require social work intervention. Likewise, knowledge about Maslow’s need hierarchy, would give insight to social workers in dealing with excessively shy and lonely children feeling frustrated for not being able to make friends and fulfill need to belongingness. In group work too, deviant group members may be encouraged to be a disciplined participant in order to fulfill the need for affiliation.

Further, motivation to help others may be utilized in resource raising or arranging voluntary help for human service organizations, especially in times of natural or man-made calamities. Contrary to this, some individuals with high self esteem may feel threatened to seek help as brought out by Jeffrey Fisher and Arie Nadler, in their ‘Threat-to-self-esteem model’. Refusing to take help on account of damaging self esteem could become a ‘self destructive paradox.’

Next, doing harm to others in a human society could range from a word of insult to rape, homicide and war. In the ancient societies, aggression was a way of protecting themselves from the others, both animals and human beings who did not belong to the same group. The goal of aggression could be different Drives theories which suggest that the motivation to harm others comes from within. Social Psychologists could not agree that aggression could be intrinsic as Freud and others argued. So they rejected
this theory of aggression stemming from within. It can be historically seen (as discussed in ‘history of motivation,’ earlier in this paper) that there is prevalent disapproval to the thinking that human aggression is intrinsic or instinctive as the animals.

Conclusion

In this Chapter you gained extensive knowledge about social learning. You understood about classical conditioning, operant conditioning, cognitive learning and imitation, modeling and observational learning. More specifically, you learnt about stimuli-response associations in classical conditioning, reinforcements, positive, negative and punishment in operant conditioning for shaping behaviours. Bandura’s observational learning stressed on the principle of imitation and modeling and cognitive learning is more suited for academic learning. Latent learning and insight learning were discussed.

Memory is the encoding, storage and retrieval of information gained through the process of learning. You understood the process of memory, long term, short term memory and problems in effective learning. Theoretical application of learning principles and memory into field practice were discussed in the form of behavioural modification, behavioural therapy and so on.

Motivation is the driving force behind various behavioural objectives, desires and goals. Motivational conflicts were delineated. Salient theories describing various facets of motivation like Drive theory, Incentive theory, Optimum Level theory, Opponent Process theory, Maslow’s Need Hierarchy were discussed. Application of knowledge about motivation into the field was also discussed.
Social Learning and Motivation

References


9

Defense Mechanisms and Stress

*Archana Kaushik

Introduction

Life may be taken as a long series of adaptation and adjustment, coping and compromising. Our bodies adapt to changing atmosphere to maintain homeostasis or equilibrium. We adjust to social environment which may call for any of the broadly categorized three strategies – fight, flight or compromise. As studied in the earlier Chapters that an individual is driven (or motivated) to meet physiological, psychological and social needs and his/her behaviour is directed towards fulfilment of these needs. In case, the needs are not gratified soon, it leads to tension, frustration and guilt.

Coping is, therefore, an important behaviour exhibited by individuals in everyday life. Coping may be defined as all attempts made by the individual to master, reduce or tolerate the demands created by stress. Hence a coping skill can be considered as a behavioural tool that an individual uses to overcome a stressful situation. Perception of stressor (whether individual can cope with it successfully or not) plays important role in coping mechanism. An individual weighs the stimuli and then decides whether his/her already learnt coping mechanisms would be useful in this situation or not. This type of coping is conscious coping. It may be interesting to note that

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individuals use coping mechanisms unconsciously as well. These unconscious coping mechanisms are referred to as defense mechanisms. In this chapter, you would be studying various types of defense mechanisms like repression, regression, reaction formation, displacement, and so on.

Stress has almost become a way of life, especially in cosmopolitan and metropolitan cities due to cut throat competition in almost all walks of life. We all have had experienced stress in our respective life situations and have differential perceptions and coping styles. These coping mechanisms are considered healthy when they are able to resolve the conflict(s) successfully. On the other hand, coping mechanisms can be unhealthy or dysfunctional when the coping method does not help in solving the situation.

Stress does have substantial influence on our physical and mental health. In this chapter stress and coping are dealt with in substantial detail. Let us first look at the unconscious coping mechanisms, that is, defense mechanisms.

**Concept of Defense Mechanisms**

Defense mechanisms are essentially coping mechanisms. In order to acquire comprehensive understanding about defense mechanisms, let us quickly revise personality structure as given by Sigmund Freud that form the basis of these, more often than not, unconscious coping mechanisms. According to Freud, personality is made up of three interlinked parts – id (most primitive part containing biologically based urges, the biological self), ego (it includes elaborate ways of behaving in a socially acceptable way, the realistic self) and super ego (it consists of prohibitions learnt from parents and other authorities, the moral self). The dynamics of personality is reflected through ego’s continuous task to strike a balance between
id’s desires for instinctual gratification and strict rule following sought by the super ego.

According to Freud defense mechanisms originate in conflicts among the id, ego and super ego. Psychoanalytic theory holds that because the id’s unconscious demands are instinctual, infantile and amoral, they must, often, be blocked by ego and superego. This continuous conflict between id and ego and super ego, in turn, creates tension, anxiety and guilt. An individual, therefore, seeks ways and means to protect ego from this anxiety and guilt and sets up defenses. The mechanisms by which ego reduces its anxiety and guilt are termed as Defense Mechanisms.

**How does Defense Mechanisms Work**

Let us now appraise ‘how’ defense mechanisms work. Freud has postulated that unconscious defense mechanisms protect the individual from painful emotions, ideas and drives. When anxiety becomes too overwhelming then the ego employs defense mechanisms to protect the individual. These defense mechanisms are, in fact, the processes that distort or exclude information or feelings from the individual. Stated otherwise, these defense mechanisms tend to help an individual to distort information and perceive situations in a different way, so that the individual feels secured. Thus, the purpose of these defense mechanisms is to deal with internal conflicts or intra psychic conflicts as well as help individual to adapt to recurring interpersonal conflicts.

Certain characteristics of these defense mechanisms may well be delineated. These defense mechanisms are, indeed, powerful tools to manage biological instincts and associated emotions. More often than not, they are unconscious. There are as many as 17 types of defense mechanisms as identified and noted by Freud, which are unique and distinct from each other.
Defense mechanisms are dynamic and reversible. Another noteworthy feature is that they can be adaptive as well as pathological. Stated differently, ‘normal person’ uses defense mechanisms in a moderate manner to protect themselves from perceived danger or threat or psychic pain, while a person suffering from some mental ailment uses them too often.

**Relevance of Defense Mechanisms for Social Work**

Though defense mechanisms are psychic functions, they have great significance for social work profession too. After carefully reading about these defense mechanisms, you may gain insight into the personality of human beings and may help you to understand the coping patterns of your clients in a better way. During your day to day interactions with family and friends, colleagues and neighbours, you may observe people making use of these defense mechanisms differentially depending upon their own perception of self, of social reality, socialization pattern and experiences of life events. You may even introspect your own behaviour in certain social situations and appraise usage of certain defense mechanisms. However, certain assumptions regarding defense mechanisms may well be delineated so as to enhance your comprehensive understanding about these defenses.

The foremost aspect, as described above is their universal existence. There would hardly be any exceptions in this regard. These psychic processes often go unnoticed and form the reality of our unconscious self. Others, through careful observation of our behaviour may tell about our certain behaviours as ‘particular defense mechanisms’. Further, while going through these defence mechanisms, you may come across terms like ‘threatening stimuli’, ‘painful reality’, anxiety, frustration, and so on. These are the conflicts arising out of interplay of id impulses and superego and ego trying to mediate.
People react differently to same types of situations, consciously and unconsciously. Defenses are unconscious coping patterns that try to protect and help ego to strike a balance between id impulses and superego. It is normal and natural to use defense mechanisms but problem begins when certain people start overusing them, which, then calls for professional intervention by experts in psychology and psychiatry.

**Types of Defense Mechanisms**

The following are some of the common defenses identified by Freud and his contemporaries.

**Repression**

As per Freud’s theory, repression is the fundamental technique individuals use to relieve anxiety caused by conflicts. Repression is the active mental process by which a person ‘forgets’ by ‘pushing down’ into the unconscious the thoughts causing anxiety. Stated in other words, it involves forgetting emotionally painful memories. These painful thoughts may not surface at conscious level and person apparently might have forgotten about them, they definitely remain at unconscious level and may be a cause of certain mental ailments like phobias. At times, these ‘forgotten’ thoughts may be reflected in what is commonly termed as ‘slip of tongue’. According to psychologists and psychiatrists, repression is an expensive defence mechanism as it silently causes harm to mental health of the individual. Since memories are repressed and actually not forgotten, it may become a precipitating factor for neurotic symptoms later in life. An example of repression: a man under the influence of alcohol may attempt to murder his friend and later on gaining senses, may not genuinely recall what and why of his behaviour.
Projection
You must have heard the popular saying that ‘man projects what he is not’. Dishonest person may talk a lot about honesty, pretending that he is honest but the world is dishonest. Blaming others or projection is a way of coping with one’s undesirable motives by projecting or shifting them on to someone else. This unconscious shifting of vices and id impulses on others reduces the anxiety arising from the internal conflict. Individuals projecting their own unacceptable hostile feelings about others in their social environment are said to be using projection defense mechanism. A man urging to make easy money by accepting bribe in his office, may face internal conflict with his own value system and may maintain that all other people in his office are corrupt and dishonest. Excessive use of this defense mechanism may act as a trigger for behavioural disorder known as paranoia.

Rationalization
You may recall Aesop’s famous fable of the fox trying hard for grapes but couldn't reach to them and finally goes away saying, “grapes are sour”. This is rationalization where people ‘make excuses’. This defense mechanism substitutes an acceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one. Rationalization may not be confused with lying as the individual believes in his/her explanation. In this, something we cannot get becomes something we did not want. A man who desperately wanted to go abroad to work and earn, tried hand and couldn’t succeed. He maintained that since his parents are old and there is none to look after them, he dropped the idea to go abroad. He gives excuse or rationalizes because bringing out reality that he lacked necessary calibre would have been really painful for his ego. If overused, it can prevent us from coping with situation head-on.
**Regression**

Regression involves going back to an old, less sophisticated method of doing things. Whenever, a threatening situation arises, an individual may retreat to an earlier form of adaptation, generally a childish or primitive one. A five year old child may revert to bed-wetting or thumb sucking on being upset with the arrival of new baby at home that has apparently reduced his importance in the family. Another little 4 year old girl finding it difficult to cope with demands of school may go back to ‘baby talk’ or demand cuddling. Adults, too, with dextrous communication skills and maturity may regress to shouting and physical altercation rather than controlling impulses and letting go of an argument. Such behaviour may ward off anxiety by focussing attention on earlier ways of achieving tranquillity.

**Intellectualisation**

Intellectualisation refers to using excessive use of intellectual processes to avoid affective expressions or experiences. This defense mechanism uses reasoning power and looks at the ‘threatening situation’ in a detached way. It is said that using this intellectualisation process, anxiety is reduced by a retreat into detached, unemotional and abstract language. An educated unemployed youth may discuss about rampant unemployment rate in the country in the light to government’s new economic policy – in this, what he is doing – discussing at an intellectual and impersonal plane the problem he is facing in a very personalized way. By doing so, he is dealing with his own anxiety and self-esteem. It is believed that by temporarily discussing the cognitive and emotional components sometimes helps the individual to deal with parts of an experience when the whole is too much to handle. In fact people involved in human service professions like doctors, nurses, social workers often intellectualise the sufferings
that they see in their clients to avoid being overwhelmed by emotional involvement, which may be regarded as ‘weakness’. A person might talk about feelings in an emotionally disconnected manner and unduly emphasize on the inanimate and external reality. It is also a higher order version of Isolation and is related somewhat to rationalization.

**Reaction Formation**

Reaction formation refers to transforming an unacceptable impulse, feeling or thought into its opposite. Reversal of motive is a method by which individuals attempt to cope with conflict arising out of unsought for impulses. The underlying principle operative here is ‘the best defense is a good offence’. To exemplify, a man obsessed with sexual feelings surging on the surface, may out rightly condemn sexual stimuli in the form of media portrayal (movies, contents of television programmes, advertisements) and go to the extent of joining crusades against sex in the media. Likewise, people, in order to hide their evils like alcoholism, womanizing, abuse, exploitation, may become too affectionate, too modest, too strident in order to nullify their unconsciously harbouring the opposite feelings.

**Displacement**

In displacement, the individual substitutes a different goal object for the original one, though the prime motive remains unaltered. This defense mechanism is generally observed in the cases of anger and frustration, when person finds it difficult to vent out on the source of anger or frustration. For instance, a woman is ridiculed by her boss in the office and couldn’t ventilate her anger anywhere else but in turn scolds her child in any petty issue at home. A child depressed by lack of attention from her parents might vent out anger and frustration on her toys. In displacement, the person ventilates his/her negative emotions, mainly
anger and frustration, on a relatively harmless person/object.

**Sublimation**

According to Freud, sublimation is the highest level of ego-defense and is taken as one of the most constructive defense mechanisms. It is resolving a conflict by changing a socially objectionable aim to an acceptable one. For example, sexual energy is often sublimated into creative tasks and aggression into hard work. A writer may sublimate his libido into creation of a book. In fact, Freud has maintained that much of our cultural heritage in terms of literature, music, art and the like is the outcome of sublimation. This is the manner by which an individual converts his/her negative energies into something creative, positive and healthy.

**Introjection**

Introjection refers to internalising the qualities/traits of an object or person to oneself so as to reduce the painful awareness of or threat or fear of separation from that loved one. To exemplify, a little child who is left alone frequently as their parents go out to work, may try to become ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ so as to reduce fear. Through the introjection of a loved one or a loved object the painful awareness of separateness or threat of loss may be avoided. It may be taken as opposite to regression in which, instead of going back, individuals tend to behave like grown ups, powerful, mature and composed adults. You may have come across small children pretending to behave like adults, copying their smoking habit, making mustachios on their faces, especially girls putting on bindi, lipstick like their mothers. This gives a sense of power and reduces the feeling of anxiety and frustration.
Denial

Avoiding the awareness of some painful aspect of reality is denial. Individuals using this defense mechanism may often exhibit strong denial of reality in a repeated and forceful manner. People who are in crisis situation, more often than not, display denial mode initially. For instance, an HIV positive person, when his HIV status is disclosed to him in a counselling session, may strongly negate the finding. A wife may deny the authenticity of the news of her husband. This denial provides relief from a harsh, bitter reality only for a short span of time.

Undoing

Undoing covers usage of some actions or thoughts to neutralise the effects of something that was said or done. For example, after beating and abusing his wife, man may bring flowers and gifts for her, may try to be extra accommodating and caring. Working mothers, to avoid their guilt of not being able to give sufficient time to their children due to their demanding jobs, may ‘compensate’ by giving in to their undue demands, making special foods for them, buying them gifts too often and even ignoring their disdainful behaviours.

Acting out

It is expressing an unconscious wish or impulse through an action to avoid being conscious of an accompanying affect. The unconscious feeling or thought is lived out impulsively in behaviour, thereby expressing the undesirable feelings, emotions and thoughts and not blocking it. For instance, in utter hatred, a man may actually physically hurt the person (object of hatred). In fact, some so called calm and composed persons have murdered the other person as the boiling anger and hatred against him/her burst out. A wife who was quietly
tolerating the atrocities, exploitation, abuse from her husband, kills him in a fit of rage is an example of acting out.

**Dissociation**

In dissociation, in order to avoid emotional distress, the person disassociates or disconnects himself/herself from the painful reality. This defense mechanism, temporarily but drastically, modifies a person’s sense of identity and social reality in order to shun away the utter agony and pain. Hearing the news of death of her only child, mother may cut off herself from all the sense of self and reality. It is entirely an unconscious mechanism. In extreme cases of dissociation, the person might develop a parallel identity in himself/herself to avoid emotional distress. Common clinical manifestations of this defense mechanism are multiple personality disorders and fugue states.

**Isolation**

Isolation refers to severing the connection between the feeling and the situation in order to avoid the painful reality. For example, someone may totally immerse himself in the social obligations surrounding the death of a loved one.

After studying some of the significant defense mechanisms, let us look at their relevance in social work practice. They are of great importance to understand those psychic processes of your clients, by which, most of than not, they are unaware. During case work, you may come across some of the ‘repressed memories’ of your client through slip of tongue and you may not like to miss those cues so as to design effective intervention plan. Careful appraisal of interaction with clients and target audience would give you signals through these defense mechanisms about their subtle psychic processes and personality types. For instance, during your community work if a person stresses
too much on honesty, may actually be using reaction formation defense mechanism.

Though defense mechanisms are situation specific, disassociation and isolation defense mechanisms may reflect that existing coping patterns of your clients are not sufficient to deal with the crisis situation at hand. Sublimation is considered a positive way to channelize energy into constructive activities. Rationalization and reaction formation among children may be an indicator to teach them better coping patterns where they enhance their skills and expertise and work harder rather than finding excuses and blaming others.

Projection, in fact, is used for research purposes too. Many projective techniques and semi-projective techniques are heavily been used to seek the ‘real’ answers and preventing the respondents to merely give politically correct responses to your queries. In child guidance centres too, when little children are unable to express their fears and anxieties, projective techniques are used to get cues about their fears, anxiety and emotions. For example, cards with pictures of animals (say, mumma bear with baby bear in one side and another child bear standing in the corner is shown) and the child is asked to construct a story out of that to appraise his psyche. [If the child says mumma bear loves baby bear and not her other child, it reflects sibling rivalry and being upset with the sharing of his parents’ love and attention with his younger sibling].

Likewise, excessive repression might lead to acting out, which needs to be prevented. As social workers you may make your clients aware of adequate and healthy ways of coping and may train them with effective and positive coping skills that would minimize the probable harm caused by excessive reliance on defense mechanisms. Therefore, knowledge about these defense mechanisms is
of vital importance for social work professionals in almost all the settings.

**Stress**

Stress has become an inevitable reality of contemporary times. Baum (1990) has defined it as a negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral changes that are directed either toward altering the stressful event or accommodating to its effects. Though, apparently, stress is considered a negative avoidable feeling, it has a positive connotation too. In fact, psychologists and social scientists maintain that a minimum level of stress is needed to ‘push’ us towards our set goals. Non-existence of stress would lead to lack of motivation to perform. This positive stress is termed as **eustress**. This eustress helps students prepare for exams, unemployed to search for job, people to finish their respective work. Stress becomes a cause of concern when it starts affecting our social functioning and is commonly referred to as **distress**. Certain situations like loss of job, bereavement, divorce, may result in distress.

**Why do we become stressful?**

There are certain events or stimuli in the physical and social environment that are considered as stressors. What makes events or incidents stressful? In fact, events in themselves are not inherently stressful, it is our perception that makes the event stressful or not. In general, eustress results when the stimuli are known and the individual is assured that learnt coping patterns would be able to respond successfully. However, when the stimuli are perceived to overpower the existing coping skills, stress sets in. So, perception is an important function in stress and the manner in which the individual views and evaluates the stressful experience is termed as **Appraisal**.
The appraisal has two stages – primary appraisal covers the intensity of threat and secondary appraisal makes judgement about the coping options. Appraisal is a subjective experience so as the stress. The individual may perceive the event as positive, negative or neutral in terms of their consequences. Negative or potentially negative events are further appraised for their possible harm, threat or challenge qualities.

Likewise, ‘harm’ is the assessment of the damage already done by the event, for example, a man having lost his job and experiencing low confidence. On the other hand, ‘threat’ is the assessment of possible future damage that may be caused by the event, say, possibility of losing job which may result in financial crunch. Events may also be appraised in terms of their ‘challenge’, which is the potential to overcome and even profit from the event. For example, a man feeling that the loss of job has given him a chance to try a new area of work that he has been considering. Thus, reactions to potentially stressful events depend on their meaning for the individual.

Researches have beyond doubt shown that stress is a precipitating factor in causing physical as well as psychological ailments. Blood pressure, coronary heart diseases, diabetes, body ache, muscle tensions, sodalities, are some of the ailments that get triggered due to stress and tension. Many people, in order to curb stress may opt for unhealthy coping patterns like alcoholism, smoking, tobacco chewing, drug addiction and so on. These, in turn, have lethal effects on the health of the body, if consumed beyond proportions chronically.

**Psychological Dimensions of Stress**

Stress has psychological dimensions too. It may trigger many of the psychological ailments like neurosis, psychosomatic ailments, schizophrenia and other
personality disorders. You may know that in our country, mental health ailments often go un-noticed and un-recognized, labelled and stigmatized. Mental health services are often denied and not accessed by the needy persons. These stress related, both physical as well as psychological, disorders create problems in social life of the persons affected for obvious reasons.

It may be noted that stress is not only affecting the youth and adults but also taking children into its clutches. More and more young children are suffering from stress and tension related to academics. Increasing social Darwinism coupled surging parental expectations are taking heavy toll of students’ physical and mental health. Children are adopting faulty coping styles in terms of taking in prohibited and prescribed (for enhancing memory) drugs, resorting to alcoholism, and even committing suicides.

Let us see the physiological processes during encounter with stress. When the organism perceives a threat, the body is rapidly aroused through the sympathetic nervous system and the endocrine system. The organism readies to attack the threat or to flee/ avoid the stressor. This is the “flight or fight” response. In a situation where the organism is unable to either fight or flee and is exposed to prolonged stress, the state of prolonged physiological arousal may continue for an extended period of time and lay the foundation for health problems.

Individuals cope with threatening stimuli both consciously as well as unconsciously. It may be important to understand how individuals appraise and cope with stress. Let us now understand about coping in the next section.

**Coping with Stress**

Coping with stress is a universal phenomenon. The factors influencing coping behaviour are both person centered and situation specific. Coping, in itself, is not adaptive or
maladaptive in nature. It is defined as an individual’s cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage (reduce, minimize, master or tolerate) specific internal or external demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the persons resources (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980).

Coping is broadly divided into two categories— Emotion focused (this type of coping is directed toward regulating the feelings or affect surrounding a stressful experience) and Problem focused (this category of coping involves direct efforts to modify the problem causing the distress). However, in most of the situations, a combination of both these types of coping is used. Another commonly used coping behaviour is accessing social support to deal with stressful situations which is also an amalgamation of emotional support and practical or informational support.

**Physiological Aspect of Coping**

Let us look at the physiological aspect of coping. Hans Selye in 1956 formulated the general adaptation syndrome which explains how individuals adapt themselves and cope with stressful situations, in the following three stages: first is Alarm reaction stage when an individual recognises the existence of a threat or stress or a situation that is difficult to cope with. Resistance is the second stage which is experienced when the stress gets prolonged and the person decides the responses like fight-or-flight. Stage of exhaustion is the final stage which is experiences when stressful situation still persists. During this stage the individuals’ resistance declines and this might make the individual more prone to stress related diseases.

**Psychological Aspects of Coping**

Now we look at psychological aspects of coping. Emotion focused coping includes various strategies like distraction (includes taking up activities that would help in taking
the mind off from tension and stress, for instance, watching movie, listening to music), denial/blame (using defense mechanisms), use of religion/faith (for instance, praying to God) and acceptance/redefinition (this is the positive coping style where the individual accepts the reality and acts with a positive attitude in mind).

People have differential coping styles, which are the outcome of interplay of various factors like socialization pattern, modelling, imitation, previous experiences to mention a few. Based on personality coping has been categorized into neuroticism (associated with the increased use of escapist fantasy, self blame and hostile reaction and maladaptive cognitive distortions) and extraversion (associated with the use of rational action, positive thinking, adaptive problem oriented coping and support seeking).

**Coping Mechanisms**

Overt behavioural responses in the coping process may well be delineated here. Some of the common coping mechanisms are:

i) Striking out at others or aggression directed intentionally to hurt someone. This coping is not very helpful as in certain situations the aggressive expression might become the source of stress. For example, in interpersonal relations when we have a fight with a friend, as result of an aggressive feelings felt, the fight might become a source of added stress for the person.

ii) Giving up and withdrawing from a situation is another coping behaviour frequently exhibited by some individuals. This is also referred to as learned helplessness which includes passive behaviour produced by exposure to unavoidable aversive events.
When an individual experiences constant stress over a long period of time he develops apathy and stops making any attempt to consciously cope with the situation. This coping behaviour is usually seen when the situation is appraised to be beyond the control of the individual.

iii) Indulging oneself or self indulgence is another coping mechanism in the face of stress. In the face of stressful situation individuals indulge in excessive behaviours like excessive eating, drinking, smoking, or spending. One indulges in such kinds of behaviour to get satisfaction from other substitute sources.

**Coping Styles**

As social work professionals your role lies in helping the clients learn resilience or healthy coping styles, while reducing the dysfunctional ones. Constructive coping styles would involve the following aspects:

- Interpreting the environment as benign, generally expect things to go well and believe that people do not intent to harm unless there are reasons to believe otherwise. This positive outlook towards life goes a long way in providing spiritual strength to the individuals.

- Putting negative experiences into a perspective and interpreting them as part of a larger picture would help a great deal in looking at the problem at hand in an objective unbiased manner. By doing so, the individual may realize the failures as lack of necessary calibre and may work harder to acquire needed competence and expertise.

- When life is taken as something that can be influenced and acted upon, stressful events are perceived as challenges. Fatalistic and pessimistic attitudes,
therefore, must be replaced by the optimism, confidence in self and dynamism.

- Individuals should be taught to handle their emotions like frustration, anger, jealousy in the right manner (using catharsis, yoga, relaxation therapies, meditation, sports, physical exercises, sublimation). Emotional stability goes a long way in and do not have the tendency to experience negative emotions.

These form the general description of what constitutes an intervention package to reduce stress. Specific tailor-made intervention components for students, women at workplace, people in corporate and other demanding jobs, may be developed to meet differential needs and problems of target groups. For example, some of the components of intervention programme for working women may include information about significance of physical exercise, balancing relaxation techniques, networking them with support services like crèche, day care centres for elderly, bill-payment agencies and so on. Likewise, students may be given tips to develop schedules for studying, rehearsals, taking in exams, career guidance and so on. Their parents and teachers should simultaneously be counselled to have realistic expectation from them and becoming sensitive to identify cues for any faulty coping patterns like drug addiction, suicidal tendencies, etc.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter, you have studied defense mechanisms, which are unconscious coping patterns adopted by the ego to strike a balance between id impulses and super ego. Some of the important defense mechanisms are – Regression that involves going back to an old, less sophisticated method of doing things; Rationalization involves offering rational explanations in an attempt to justify; Reaction Formation is transforming an
Defense Mechanisms and Stress

unacceptable impulse or feeling or thought into its opposite; Repression involves forgetting an emotionally painful memory; Projection defense mechanism pushes the clients’ unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or impulses outward, onto another person; Displacement is replacing one goal object with another; Sublimation is resolving a conflict by changing a socially objectionable aim to an acceptable one; Acting out is expressing an unconscious wish or impulse through action; Dissociation involves temporarily but drastically modifying a person’s character or one’s sense of personal identity; Introjection involves internalising the qualities of an object or person to oneself; Intellectualisation is excessive use of intellectual processes to avoid affective expressions or experience; Isolation refers to severing the connection between feeling and the situation; Undoing uses some actions or thoughts to neutralise the effects of something that was said or done; and Denial is avoiding the awareness of some painful aspect of reality. Usage of defense mechanisms in social work practice has been discussed.

In the Chapter, stress was dealt with at length. We understood that concept of stress and its physiological and psychological dimensions. Stress is experienced by individuals occurs in the form of life events, chronic stressors and daily hassles. The role of stress in the development of physical and psychological illnesses was discussed. Characteristics of the stressor in terms of the domain and type of stress were also described. In the last section, coping mechanisms, both healthy and dysfunctional, to deal with stress were discussed in great detail.

References


10

Stages of Human Growth and Development

Introduction

Human growth and development affect the lives of millions of people around the world. Human growth and development studies are very fascinating but very complicated too. Changes are most obvious in the early years of life but these changes continue to occur throughout the life. The changes in the human lifetime are abundant, varied and complex to study. The scientist study human growth and development focusing on the developmental changes. Development is dependent on various influences in the environment of the individuals. Understanding these influences and the way they interact is of enormous practical use. Heredity (internal influences) and environment (external influences) interact in various ways to determine growth and development. It is difficult to assign any human characteristic a particular heredity label or a particular environmental label. The family has been held accountable for the child’s growth and development. There is a two-way relation between the family and the child. While the family members definitely influence development of the child, even the child contributes in influencing his or her family as well. The community also determines how each individual human being develops by determining and strengthening a number of behaviour and overlooking others. The community

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members are vital source of social, economic and emotional support for each other.

**Understanding the Terms—Human Growth and Development**

Human growth and development together focuses on the ways in which people live and change themselves. These two forms refer to the increases of social change. Although all individuals are different, yet they follow expected patterns of growth and development that are common for all. The study of these processes focuses on describing, explaining, predicting and modifying in trend of social change. The diverse facets of development (physical growth and psychosocial) do not happen in isolation.

If we trace the history of the evolution of human growth and development studies we see that it was in the nineteenth century that child development began as a scientific study. Adolescence was not thought of as a separate stage of human growth and development until the twentieth century. Contributions by G. Stanley Hall introduced adolescences as an important stage and also he was the first psychologist to study aging. Aging only became a major area of study since 1940s. Now-a-days a lot of importance is given to human growth and development as it helps us in understanding the human beings that is ourselves and others from conception to death, the changes we are undergoing in each of the stages.

Human beings like all animals, start life as a single cell, the fertilized ovum. This cell divides and grows and develops into the embryo, fetus, child and adult. Growth and development occurs simultaneously, they are distinct biological processes. Growth can be defined as a quantitative increase in size or mass. Measurements of heights in centimeters or weights in kilograms tell us how much growth has occurred in the human being. To add to
this the growth of a body organ, like kidney, brain can be explained by measuring the number, weight, or size of cells present. Development is defined as a progression of changes, either quantitative or qualitative that head from an undifferentiated or immature state to a highly organized, specialized and mature state, for example, the development of motor skills of a child that results in walking or running.

**Stages of Human Growth and Development**

Various educationalists and psychologists have classified the different stages of growth and development and conducted in depth study on each stage and their characteristics. The study into the different stages of human growth and development is important as we can learn the common and particular age changes, when these changes happen, what are the reasons for them to occur, how they further affect behaviour, can these changes be foreseen and are they universal? The stages of human growth and development can be divided into different age groups from the conception in the womb till the death of that human being. These stages are broadly classified into eight categories and these are:

- Prenatal stage—conception to birth
- Infancy and babyhood—birth to three years
- Early childhood—three to six years
- Late childhood—six to twelve years
- Adolescence—twelve to eighteen years
- Young adulthood—eighteen to forty years
- Middle age—forty to sixty—five years
- Late adulthood—sixty—five and above

Let us discuss each of these stages in detail
The Prenatal Stage

The first stage of human growth and development is not from the first day that the child is born into this world but from the day when the child is conceived in the womb of the mother. The beginning of human life has always been very fascinating. The biological beginning of a human being is a moment when a single spermatozoon, one of the million sperm cells from the father, unites with an ovum (egg cell), one of the hundred thousand ova produced and stored in the mother’s body. This process is called fertilization or conception when the sperm and the ovum join together to create a single cell called a zygote. The prenatal stage is the gestation time when the developments occur from conception to the birth; this takes approximately nine months or two hundred and sixty-six days. The zygote replicates again and again with cell division. It develops first into an embryo, then into a fetus, and finally emerges as a complicated human being with millions of cells specializing in various functions of the human body.

Prenatal Stage and Heredity

The prenatal stage is very important as it determines a number of important features of the human being to be born. The union of the sperm and the ovum bring about the biological inheritance. These interact with the environmental influences within and outside the womb. In this period we can trace the prenatal development, describe influences upon it and report on procedure to examine and intervene in it. Through genetic counseling, probable parents can find out the mathematical odds of giving birth to children with birth defects. Thus this prenatal period is important to identify any abnormalities in the baby to be born.

The basic unit of heredity is the gene, which is made up of DNA. Chromosomes carry the genes that determine
inherited characteristics. At conception each normal human being inherits 23 chromosomes from the mother and 23 chromosomes from the father. The 23rd chromosome is the sex chromosome. If a child receives an X chromosome from each parent, the child would be a female. If a Y chromosome is contributed by the father, a male child will be conceived. Thus the sex of the child is actually the father’s contribution. Thus it is said that heredity is responsible to most of the similarity between siblings, the dissimilarities is due to the unshared environment.

**The Infancy and Babyhood Stage**

The infancy and the babyhood stage is the period between birth to three years of the human being. This stage also is associated to rapid growth and development. Birth normally starts when the fetus is prepared and there are four stages:

1) Dilation of the cervix;
2) Moving down and emergence of the baby;
3) Discharge of the umbilical cord and the placenta;
4) Contraction of the uterus and the revival of the mother.

The neonatal period is the first month of the child. This period is the time of transition. At birth the infant’s circulatory, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and temperature regulation systems become independent of the mother’s. The newborn babies alternate between states of sleep, awake, and activity. Sleep takes up majority of their time. In this stage that extents to three years, it is observed that the first year the baby’s body grows very fast. Breastfeeding has high physiological benefits and increases the mother-infant bond. The sensory capacities are present from birth and develop rapidly in the first few months of life. During the first three months of life the baby starts to gain control
over their body movements. Motor skill develops and the baby also attempts self-locomotion.

Physical growth and development occur at gradually decelerated rates throughout babyhood and development of the physiological functions take place at a faster pace. Muscle control starts from head, arm and hand skills. In this period we also observe language development. Communication starts when the baby comprehends what others are communicating to them, and then they communicate with others. Prelinguistic speech, that precedes the words, includes crying, cooing, babbling and imitating sounds. Babies also commonly use gestures. By 10 months, babies begin to understand meaningful speech. The baby begins with the first words by 10 to 14 months. By age three, grammar and syntax are fairly developed. Early social foundations in this stage are important because the type of behaviour baby’s show in social situations affect their personal and social adjustment. These patterns tend to persist life long. Discipline’s role in moral development is mainly in the form of punishment and rewards for wrong behaviour and approved behaviour respectively. Sex role typing also begins in this period. The foundations are laid for psychosocial development including emotions, temperament, and early experiences with parents.

This stage also evolves the self-concept of the individual in the following sequence:

- Physical self-recognition and self-awareness,
- Self-description and self-evaluation, and
- Emotional response to wrongdoing.

**The Early Childhood Stage**

The stage of early childhood extends from three to six years. It is called by different names as the toy age, preschool
age, troublesome age or the pre-gang age. Physical development proceeds at a slow rate in early childhood; the physiological habits started in the babyhood stage get confirmed in this stage. This period is also the skill acquiring period as the child easily repeats and picks up skills. Speech development improves quickly as also in comprehension. The emotional development follows a particular pattern according to intelligence, gender, family background and child rearing practices experienced by the individual. Play is important for the overall development of the child. Play is influenced by the motor skills acquired by the child, their popularity among other group-mates and the socioeconomic status of their families. Parents, companions and different family relationship play an important role in the socialization process and in developing the self-concept of the child. Parents influence children’s behaviour through discipline, ways of teaching, self-control and acceptable behaviour.

**The Late Childhood Stage**

Late childhood extends from six years to twelve years. This period is before the period when the child is sexually mature. The physical growth in this period is relatively at an even rate and is influenced by health, nutrition, immunization, sex and intelligence. The skills developed in the late childhood can be categorized into four groups: self-help skills, social-help skills, school skills, and play skills. All areas of speech-pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure improve rapidly. Older children learn to control the overt expressions of their emotions and to use emotional catharsis to clear pent up emotions caused by social pressures. Older children are interested in activities with their peer and want to belong to a group or gang. These children will often reject parental standards, develop antagonistic attitude towards persons of the opposite sex. There is rapid understanding of concepts as
a result of intelligence and learning opportunities. Children in this period develop moral codes influenced by moral standards of the groups they belong to. The interests of older children are broader than those of younger children and include many new subjects like clothes, human body, sex, school, future vocation, status symbol and autonomy. Sex-role typing in late childhood influences children’s appearance, behaviour, aspirations, achievements, interests, attitude towards opposite sex persons, and self-evaluation.

**The Adolescence Stage**

Adolescence extends from twelve years to eighteen years, the period when the individual becomes sexually mature and ends when the individual is legally mature. This period in the life span of the individual is important, as it is a transitional phase, a time of changes, a problem age, a time when the individual looks for an identity and a threshold of adulthood. In adolescence puberty is a short phase, it occurs at different ages for boys and girls. The average age in girls is thirteen and is marked by the onset of menarche or first menstruation and in boys is fourteen years and is determined by the nocturnal emissions. The rapid growth and change in puberty is determined by hereditary factors and environmental factors like nutrition, health, and emotional stress. Puberty changes affect physical well-being, attitudes and behaviour. It’s important that individuals in puberty relate to normalcy and do not develop negative self-concept, unable to accept the bodily changes and the sex-roles demanded on them by society.

The developmental task of adolescence calls for changes in children’ attitudes and behaviour, many adolescence reach maturity with excelling in some of these developmental tasks the others they carry on in adulthood. The important social changes in adolescences include peer-group influence, mature social behaviour. Some of the
important interests of adolescences are recreational interests, personal and social interests, educational interests, vocational and religious interests and interests in status symbols. There are changes in morality in this period shifting from specific moral concepts to generalized moral concepts of right and wrong and there is a control on their behaviour by the development of conscience. Adolescence is a period of heightened emotions thus sometimes the relationship with family members are strained. They feel that parents are unable to understand them.

The Young Adulthood Stage

Young adulthood extends from age eighteen to approximately age forty, when the physical and psychological changes occur and also accompany the beginning of the loss of reproductive capacity. The young adulthood is the settling period and the reproductive age, a time of commitments and independency, there are changes in value system. The adult adjusts to new life patterns. The aids to mastering the developmental tasks of this stage are physical efficiency, motor and mental abilities, motivation and a good role model. The personal interests include interests in clothes and keeping themselves presentable. The adult wants to be mature and respectable and wants status in money and religion matters. Social activities in this period are mostly reduced because of family, vocational and professional responsibilities. This is the time that individuals have to plan their professional life and settle in an occupation. Social mobility in men most of the time is due to their own efforts and hard work. While in women, social mobility could be because of their achievements they move up the social ladder or because they marry into a higher-class family and they move up the social ladder.
Vocational adjustment can be very demanding, which includes selection of a vocation, settling down in their occupation and adjusting to the work environment. The vocational adjustment can be seen in the achievements made by the individuals, frequent changes in their jobs and the job satisfaction experienced by the individuals.

Family adjustment in this period can also be very difficult. There are many changes in the family roles and responsibility. Marital adjustment also calls for changes in the day-to-day routines of the individuals. In some cases like lack of preparation for marriage, early marriage, unpractical and too much of romantic ideas of marriage and a lot of role changes can cause many problems in marriage. Parenthood can also cause changes in attitudes, values, roles and responsibility. Women have to make a lot of changes adjusting to the new family, more so if it’s a joint family and at the arrival of the children. Many factors control the adjustment to parenthood, like attitudes towards pregnancy and parenthood, age of the parents, sex of the children, parental expectation and the children’s temperament. Success in marriage can be judged by seven criteria: husband, wife happiness, cordial parent-child relations, good adjustment of children, ability to deal with differences, good handling of finances, we feeling, adjustment with in-laws. It has to be observed that now a days single-hood among men and women are more acceptable than in the earlier times.

The Middle Adulthood or Middle Age Stage

Middle adulthood or middle age begins at forty and extends to sixty years. In this period physical and psychological decline is observed. Middle age can be a difficult time and successful adjustment to this stage depends on the essential base laid down in the earlier stages. This age is called the dreaded period of transition and stress. This
period is also of achievements and of evaluations. Sometimes this is also the time of boredom and empty nests as children have grown up and moved out for higher studies or employment or married off. The individuals are suddenly lonely and don’t know how to manage their free time. Physical changes occur in appearance, physiological functioning and sexuality and adjusting to it can get very difficult. In women the menopause changes is because there is reduction in estrogen and there is psychological stress. While in men there is a physiological and psychological changes which affect their attitude, behaviour and self-evaluation. In today’s times, more so the success in adjusting to middle age is by successfully being able to hide your physical signs of aging and to be involved with ways to keep oneself young and trim. Mental decline in the middle age also starts. The interests in religion are also on the increase in the middle age. In this age group there are changes in the recreational interests. There is an interest in physical recreation, which involves fewer persons, apart from lesser recreational interests the middle age individual is more adult oriented than family oriented. It is observed that social interests and activities are greatly inclined by social-class status, sex, and marital status.

The Late Adulthood (Old Age) Stage
Late adulthood or old age begins at sixty and extends till death. Physical and psychological decline fastens up in this period. In today’s modern times, medical techniques and cautious clothing and grooming interests make many men and women to look, act, and feel as they did when they were much younger. It has been observed that there is difference in individuals in their effect of aging as physical aging precedes psychological aging. The physical changes include changes in appearance, and in the different internal physical systems, changes in different physiological
functioning, sensory and sexual changes. The changes in motor capacities are changes in strength and speed, more time needed to learn new abilities. There are different causes for the changes in the mental abilities of the individual in this stage, important among these are lack of environmental stimulation and lack of motivation to be mentally alert. Changes in interests are caused because of different reasons like deterioration in health and economic status, change in residence and marital status and change in values. Changes in recreational activities in old age are because of changes in health, economic and marital status, living conditions. Thus there is a shift in how they spend their time for recreations.

The employment opportunity for older workers are restricted by compulsory retirement, hiring practices, pension plan, social attitudes, sex of the workers and the kind of work. Retirement causes change in their roles, interests, values and life patterns. Thus there is reduction in income and loneliness. Due to the death of the spouse there is cause for adjustment again. The most common living arrangements for the elderly in our society are: an elderly couple lives alone, an elderly couple live with their married son and family, an elderly widow or widower lives with the married child, now a days there is also elderly living in homes for the elders.

There are certain problems in adjustment specific to this stage that are an increase in physical and economic dependency on others, to establish new contacts, involving in new interests and activities for their leisure time which has also increased. There are adjustment to behave in a mature manner to their children who have now become adults and there is greater adjustment when individuals in this stage could also be victimized for their dependency. There is an increase in interest in religion, it could be due to the concern over death. Common physical hazards at
this stage are diseases, physical handicaps, malnutrition, accidents and sexual deprivation.

**Theories on Human Development**

There are few theories of human development that have described the different stages of human growth and development and how they affect the personality of the individuals. Thus when we talk of the different stages of human growth and development it is important to discuss the psychodynamic theories of Freud and Erikson. Freud in his psychosexual stages and Erikson’s psychosocial conflict throw light and explains complicated behaviour and personality of individual human beings in different stages of human growth and development.

**Freud’s Theory of Personality Development**

Freud’s theory of personality development centered on the effect of the sexual pleasure drive on the individual psyche of human beings. At different stages of the developmental process, Freud claims, a single body part is particularly sensitive to sexual, erotic stimulation. These parts are the mouth, the anus, and the genital region. A child at a given stage of development has certain needs and demands, such as the need of the infant to nurse. Frustration occurs when these needs are not met; overindulgence happens when these needs are met excessively then the child does not want to progress beyond this stage. Frustration and overindulgence both bind some child’s libido permanently into the stage in which they occur; both results in fixation. When the individual progresses normally through the stages, resolving each conflict and moving on, then little libido remains in each stage of development. But if he fixates at a particular stage, the method of deriving satisfaction that is characterized at that stage will dominate and affect his adult personality.
The Oral Stage
The oral stage begins at birth, when the oral cavity or mouth is the primary focus of libidal energy. The child preoccupies himself with nursing, with the pleasure of sucking and taking everything to his mouth. The oral character are those that are frustrated at this stage, are those who are refused to be nursed by their mothers, is characterized by pessimism, envy, suspicion and sarcasm. The overindulged person, whose nursing needs were always and excessively satisfied, is optimistic, gullible and is full of admiration for others around him. The stage culminates with conflict of weaning, which deprives the child of the sensory pleasure of nursing and the psychological pleasure of being cared for or mothered. This stage lasts for one and one-half years.

The Anal Stage
At one and one-half years the child enters the anal stage. With the start of toilet training starts the child's obsession with the anus and with the retention and expulsion of the feces. The child meets the conflict between the parent's demands and the child's desires and physical capabilities. Either he puts up a fight or he simply refuses to go. The child who fights takes pleasure in excreting just before or after being placed in the toilet. If parents are lenient and the child manages to derive pleasure and success from this expulsion, it will result in a character that is messy, disorganized, careless and defiant. On the other hand a child may want to retain the feces enjoying the pleasurable pressure of the built-up feces on his intestine. This tactic may cause the child to be overindulged in and they develop a character that is neat, orderly, careful, withholding and passive-aggressive. The resolution of the anal stage, proper toilet training, permanently affects the individual attitudes to possession and authority.
The Phallic Stage

The phallic stage is the setting for the crucial sexual conflict in Freud model of development. As the child becomes more interested in his genitals, and in the genitals of others, conflict occurs. The conflict labeled the Oedipus complex (the electra complex in women), involves the child’s unconscious desire to possess the opposite-sexed parent and to eliminate the same-sexed one. Freud stated that the resolution in this stage comes much later and is never complete. The boy child learns his sexual role from his father and the girl child identifies with the mother. Fixations at the phallic stage develop characters that are reckless, self-assured, and proud.

Latency Period

The latency period is not a psychosexual stage of development but a period in which sexual drive lies dormant. During this latency period, children pour their repressed libidal energy into asexual pursuits such as school, athletics, and same sex friendships. Soon puberty sets in and the genitals once again becomes a central focus of libidal energy.

The Genital Stage

In the genital stage, as the child’s energy once again focuses on his genitals, the interest turns to heterosexual relationships. The less energy the child has left invested in unresolved psychosexual developments, the greater his capacity will be to develop normal relationships with the opposite sex. If however he remains fixated his developments will be troubled as he struggles with further repression and defenses.

Erikson’s Model of Psychosocial Development

The Erikson model of psychosocial development is a very significant, highly regarded and meaningful for human
growth and development. Erikson’s eight stage theory is relevant to modern life, it helps in understanding and explaining how personality and behaviour develops in individuals. Erikson’s theory is useful for teaching, parenting, self-awareness, managing and dealing with conflict and for understanding self and others.

Erikson’s eight psychosocial stages are:

1) **Trust v Mistrust**
At the infancy stage, between the age of 0-1 1/2 years, from birth of the baby to his walking stage, the individual human being is in the first stage where the child interacts with the mother and the immediate family. The issues at this stage are mainly feeding, sleeping, being comforted and teething. The infant will develop a healthy balance between trust and mistrust if fed and cared for and not overindulged or over-protected. Abuse or neglect or cruelty will destroy trust and foster mistrust. If the infant is insulted from all or unfailingly indulged, this will create a false sense of trust causing sensory distortion, failure to appreciate reality. Infants who grow up to trust are able to hope and have faith that things are generally okay.

2) **Autonomy v Shame & Doubt**
At the early childhood stage, between the age of 1-3 years, the toddler is interacting more with his parents and family. Importance is given here to bodily functions like toilet training, muscular control like walking. Autonomy means self-reliance. This is independence of thought, and a basic confidence to think and act by oneself. Shame and doubt means what they say and inhibit self-expression and developing one’s own ideas, opinions and sense of self. Toilet and potty training is a significant part of the crisis, where parental reactions, encouragement and patience play an important role in shaping the young child’s experience and successful progression through this period.
The parents themselves are facing a challenge, as they themselves have to deal with their psychosocial crisis and deal with their own emotions of what they experienced in these formative crisis stages.

3) **Initiative v Guilt**

This is the preschool stage when the child is in the age group of 3-6 years. The child is involved with exploration, discovery, adventure and play. Erikson called this stage the Initiative versus Guilt stage. Initiative is the capability to devise actions or projects, and a confidence and belief that it is okay to do so, even with a risk of failure or making mistakes. Guilt means the feeling that it is wrong or inappropriate to instigate something of one's own design. Initiative flourishes when adventure and game-play is encouraged. Restraining adventure and experimentation, preventing young children doing things for themselves because of time, mess or risk will inhibit the development of confidence to initiate, replacing it with fear of being wrong or unapproved. Parents and elders have a challenge to get a balance between giving young children enough space and encouragement so as to give a sense of purpose and confidence, and to protect against danger and to enable a exposure to trial and error without which an irresponsible or reckless tendency can develop.

4) **Industry v Inferiority**

This is the early school stage, when the individual is in the age group of 5-12 years. The human being is interacting within the family, school and neighborhood. According to Erikson the individual experiences Industry or Inferiority attitude. Industry refers to purposeful and meaningful activity. It is the development of competence and skills and is important of the school year experience. Erikson explained this stage as an 'entrance to life'. The child who experiences the satisfaction of achievement, of things that
are positive will move towards successful negotiations of this crisis stage. The child who experiences failure at school tasks and work and worse still who is denied the opportunity to discover and develop their capacities, strengths and potential is naturally prone to feelings inferior and useless. Interacting with others and using tools or technology are also important in this stage. It is like rehearsal for being productive and being valued at work in later life. Inferiority is feeling useless, unable to contribute, unable to cooperate or work in a team to create something, with the low self-esteem that accompanies such feelings. Thus it is so important that parent, teachers and others in charge with children’s education help the children to excel at what they are naturally good with and then they will achieve the sense of purpose and industry on which everything else can then be built.

5) **Identity v Role Confusion**

This is the adolescence stage, between the age group of 11-18 years. This stage is also popular for peer and group influence. The individual is involved with resolving identity and finding direction, and growing up. Erikson named this stage as a crisis between Identity and Role Confusion. Identity means essentially how a person sees themselves in relation to their world. It’s a sense of self or individuality in the context of life and what lies ahead. Role Confusion is the negative perspective, or an absence of identity so the person cannot see clearly that they are and how they can relate positively with their environment. This stage is of puberty and adolescence and the reawakening of the sexual urge, which was dormant in the pervious stage. Young people struggle to belong and to be accepted and affirmed and yet also to become individuals. This creates a big dilemma apart from all the other distractions and confusions experienced at this stage.
6) **Intimacy v Isolation**

This is the stage of young adulthood between the ages of 18-40 years. This stage the individual is active with friends, love and work. There is development of intimate relationship, importance to work and social life. There also emerges the new duties of early parenthood. Erikson explained this stage in terms of sexual mutuality-the giving and receiving of physical and emotional connection, support, love, comfort, trust, and all the other elements that we would associate with a healthy adult relationships favorable for mating and child-rearing. Intimacy means the process of achieving relationships with family and marital or mating partner. There is strong reciprocal feature in the intimacy experienced during this stage that is the giving and receiving between sexual or marital partners. Isolation means being and feeling excluded from the usual life experiences of dating and mating and mutually loving relationships. This is characterized by feelings of loneliness, alienation, social withdrawal or non-participation.

7) **Generativity v Stagnation**

At the mid-adult stage, in the age group of 30-65, the individuals are growing and becoming independent. The individuals are now looking towards the community as there is a feeling that it is a ‘giving-back’ time, there is a feeling to help and contribute to the community. Generativity is taken from the word generation, parents unconditionally give positive love and care for their offspring. Erikson acknowledged that this stage also extends to other productive activities. Erikson’s analysis of this stage was strongly oriented towards parenting. Generativity extends beyond one’s own children, to all future generations and talks of the modern globally responsible perspective. Positive outcome of this crisis stage depends on contributing positively and unconditionally. This could also be the end of self interest.
Having children is not a prerequisite for Generativity, just as being a parent is no guarantee that Generativity will be achieved. Caring for children is the common Generativity scenario, but success at this stage actually depends on giving and caring, giving something back to life that is best to one’s capabilities. On the other hand Stagnation is a form of self-interest and self-absorption. Stagnation represents feelings of selfishness, self-indulgence, greed, lack of interest in young people and future generations, and the wider world. Stagnation results from not having an outlet or opportunity for contributing to the good or growth of children and others, and potentially to the wider world.

8) **Integrity v Despair**

The last stage of Erikson’s theory is the late adulthood period extending the age of 65 and above, this is the grandparent age. This is a review and closing stage. The previous stage was a culmination of one’s achievement and contribution to the family and future generations. Integrity means feeling at peace with oneself and the world without regrets. The linking between the stages is perhaps clearer here than in any of the other stages. People are more likely to look back on their lives positively and happily if they have left the world a better place than they found it, in whatever way, to whatever extent. There lies Integrity and acceptance. While Despair on the contrary are feelings of wasted opportunities, regrets, wishing to be able to turn back the clock and have a second chance. Happily these days for many people it’s often possible to put back even in the depths of despair. With this people are effectively rebuilding wreckage from the previous stages and that is fine.

Thus we see that Erikson in his eight psychosocial stages has explained in detail the specific characteristics of each
stage and how each stage is important in the overall human growth and development.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter, you were familiarized with the concept of human growth and development. You learned that although all human beings are different but still they share expected patterns of growth and development. This chapter helps us in describing, explaining, predicting and modifying human development.

You also learned that there are broadly eight stages of human growth and development from conception till death. Each of these stages has common and particular age changes, there are particular reasons for them to occur, they affect human behaviour and personality. These changes can be predicted and are universal among human beings.

This Chapter also looks into the psychodynamic theories of Freud and Erikson that explain the different stages of human growth and development and how they affect the human psyche and behaviour.

**References**


Introduction

The human growth and development stages are chronological by age. In these eight different stages there are physical, cognitive and psychological development. In the previous chapter the different aspects of development in the different stages have been stated. In this Chapter the biological development in eight different stages will be elaborately explained.

The biological aspects of human growth and development are the changes in the body, the brain, sensory capacities and motor skills. Most of the biological development is genetically programmed but diet, nutrition, exercise and healthy environment also contribute to the difference in biological development in human beings.

Thus this chapter will be beneficial for all to understand the growth and development in each stage and how certain aspects if taken care of will be beneficial for positive growth and development.

Formation of a New Life in the Prenatal Stage

The beginning of the human life is with Conception, when the sperm and ovum unite to form a single cell named a zygote. The gestation period lasts for about 9 months or 266 days from the conception to the birth of the baby. In
this period the zygote multiplies itself again and again by cell division and first develops into an embryo, then into a fetus and then into a human baby with trillions of cells specializing in different functions of the human body system.

**The Conception Process**

The woman is born with all the ova at the time of birth. This amounts to approximately 400,000 ova. These immature ova are in her two ovaries. In a mature woman, the ovulation that is the rupture of a mature follicle in one of the ovary and the giving out of the ovum happens approximately in every 28 days starting at puberty till the woman reaches menopause. The ovum swim’s along in the fallopian tube by tiny hair cells moves to the uterus. The conception happens when the ovum is moving through the fallopian tube.

The sperm that is very small and in the shape of a tadpole is one of the smallest cells in the body. Sperms are more active than the ova and are present in larger quantities. Sperms are produced in the testes, the reproductive gland of a mature male. Many hundred million sperms are produced every day and are ejaculated in the semen during sexual activity. In intercourse the sperms enter the vagina and swim through the cervix into the fallopian tubes.

Conception occurs when intercourse happens in the ovulation days. If conception does not happen the ovum and the sperm cells in the body of the woman dies.

**Multiple Births**

Most human babies, unlike most animals, are born alone. Multiple births happening two ways. In some cases the mother’s body releases two ova within a short duration of time and both these ova get fertilized, this results in dizygotic twins also called fraternal twins. The other cases
of multiple births happen when the single fertilized ovum splits into two, this splitting of the ovum causes monozygotic twins also called identical twins. The cases of triplets, quadruplets and other multiple births happen due to the above-mentioned ways or a combination of them.

**The Biological Development in the Prenatal Stage**

The biological development in the prenatal stage can be further divided into three stages the germinal, the embryonic and the fetal stage.

**The Germinal Stage**

The Germinal stage of the prenatal development is from the fertilization or conception to two weeks. In this stage the cell division becomes complex and gets fixed to the uterus walls.

After fertilization occurs, the single cell zygote rapidly divides itself, by the end of 3 days. It has 32 cells. The cell division goes on till the single cell at conception becomes 800 billion cells to constitute the complex human body. In this process of cell division the ovum moves from the fallopian tube to the womb or uterus within few days of the conception. By then it has become a fluid-filled blastocyst it floats in the uterus for 2 days. Few cells surrounding the blastocyst form the embryonic disk, which later forms the baby. This mass has two layers. The outer layer the ectoderm that develops into the outer skin, the nails, hair, teeth, sensory organs, the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord. The inner layer the endoderm develops into the digestive system, liver, pancreas, salivary glands and respiratory system. A middle layer also develops, the mesoderm, which becomes the muscles, skeleton, excretory and circulatory systems.
The remaining cells of the blastocyst develop into organs that nurture and protect the unborn child. These are placenta, the umbilical cord and the amniotic sac.

The placenta has multiple functions. The placenta is connected to the embryo by the umbilical cord. The umbilical cord passes oxygen and nourishment from the placenta to the baby and removes the baby’s body wastes. The placenta protects against infection in the womb and gives immunity to the developing baby. It produces hormones for this pregnancy period, develop the mother’s breasts for lactation and in the final stage stimulate the uterine contractions for the childbirth. The amniotic sac is fluid-filled membrane that helps and protects the growing baby by creating a space for it.

The trophoblast, is the outer cell layer of the blastocyst, develop minute thread kind tentacles that grow into the uterus wall and help the developing baby implant itself to the uterus. By now the blastocyst is 150 cells and is an embryo.

**Embryonic Stage**

The second stage of the prenatal period is the embryonic stage from two to eight-twelve weeks. In this gestation stage the organs and major body system develop. These are respiratory, digestive and nervous systems. This stage is important, as the embryo is most susceptible to the prenatal environment. Most of the birth defects like blindness, deafness, missing limbs happen during the first three months of pregnancy. The severely defective embryos mostly do not survive beyond the first trimester. This causes the spontaneous miscarriage when the uterus gives up the embryo.
Fetal Stage
The third stage in the gestation period is the fetal stage. The fetal stage, starts with the development of the bone cells at approximately eight weeks, the embryo becomes a fetus. In this fetal stage the fetus grows fast twenty times its length. The organs and body system develop until the baby is ready to be born.

The fetus becomes active in this stage kicking, turning, flexing and moving their bodies. They swallow, or even suck their thumbs. They can hear and feel also. Research studies have shown that the brain of the fetus, develop and they learn and remember too. The fetal activities are different in amount and kind. Male babies are slower than female babies in growth and development in and outside the womb.

Babyhood Stage
The babyhood stage starts from the birth of the child and covers the first three years of human life. In the beginning of this stage the newborn baby is a displaced individual. After the difficult childbirth process now the newborn baby has to breathe, eat and excrete by themselves.

Childbirth
Childbirth is a very complex and fascinating process. It is the beginning of a new life in the world but it is also the end of that life in the protective womb of the mother. The uterus contracts and pushes out the baby. This contraction at childbirth is of frequent regularity and higher intensity. When the gestation period is over and the important organs are ready to function outside the mother’s womb, endocrine changes in the fetus stimulates the mother’s body to produce higher amounts of estrogen which then stimulate the uterus to contract and cervix to open up.
Stages of Childbirth

Childbirth process can be classified into four stages. From when the baby in the womb enters the world outside the mother womb.

The first stage is the longest and could last for many hours. There is lot of differences from woman to woman, first childbirth to later births. In this stage the uterus contracts and the cervix widens up. Initially the contractions occur every 8 to 10 minutes and last about 30 seconds. The regularity of contractions increases just before the childbirth the contraction comes every 2 minutes and lasts for 1-2 minutes.

The labor causes most pain when the lower part of uterus and cervix stretches. The cervix has to widen sufficiently to let the baby’s head pass through. If this process is quick the duration of labor is less with little pain, but if the cervix is rigid, then the contractions and labor will be painful.

The second stage lasts for approximately 1 hour or less. This stage starts when the baby’s head begins to move through the cervix into the vaginal canal and it culminates when the baby is totally out of the mother’s body. This stage is also called the pushing stage as the mother pushes out the baby to help the baby to be out of her body. If this stage last longer than 2 hours, the baby may need help, the doctor can help by using forceps or suction to pull out the baby from the mother’s body. The baby is born but it is still connected to the mother by the umbilical cord.

The third stage is for approximately 5 to 30 minutes. The umbilical cord the connection between the baby and mother is cut and clamped. The placenta and the remaining umbilical cord are cleaned out of the mother’s womb.

The fourth stage is the time after the childbirth that extends to few hours, when the mother’s recovery is observed carefully.
The Neonatal Period

The first month of the newborn baby is the neonatal period. The baby settles to the new world outside the mother’s womb. The baby is in transition learning to live independently. The average newborn baby is approximately 20 inches and weighs 8 pounds. Size at the birth is depended on race, sex, parent’s size, and the mother’s nutrition and health. The newborn baby loses 10 per cent of their body weight within the first few days due to the loss of fluids. After a week the newborn starts to gain weight again.

Some of the distinctive features of the newborn babies are they have a large head. The baby’s skull bones are not yet fused, the bones are not completely joined for 18 months. The baby's nose cartilage is also malleable. The newborn skin is pinkish because the skin is so thin that it barely covers the capillaries through which blood flows. Some newborn are very hairy, as the prenatal hair has not yet fallen off. All newborn babies are covered by an oily protection called vernix caseosa. This protects the baby from infections.

The newborn baby is independent it needs to breath, feel and eliminate waste by themselves. The functions were very well taken care of in the mother’s womb. The newborn baby soon adjusts to these needs. The newborn’s circulatory system operates on its own after birth. The heartbeat is fast and irregular and blood pressure becomes regular only after ten days of the newborns birth.

The newborn takes his first breath after being born as soon as they are out of the mother’s body. If the newborn is not able to breath, the baby may suffer permanent brain injury due to lack of oxygen. This is called anoxia.
The newborn have an inborn sucking reflex which helps them to feed for themselves, they start sucking in milk and their gastro intestinal secretion also start digesting it. The baby eliminates waste without control as soon as their bowels and bladder are full. About fifty percent of newborns develop neonatal jaundice in three or four day after birth. This jaundice is due to the liver immaturity. This is treated by exposing the baby to sunlight or fluorescent lights. This is usually not serious but if not treated could result in brain damage.

Complications of Childbirth

Majority of births are normal resulting in healthy babies. But in some cases the babies born are too small, underweight, remain in the mother’s womb too long, are born dead or suffer complications at child birth thus the babies are in the risk of dying or physical, cognitive or personality problems.

Immunization

The newborn needs immunization that protects the babies from fatal childhood diseases like measles, rubella, mumps, whopping cough, diphtheria and poliomyelitis. New and improved vaccines are coming in worldwide. These are very important to control infant mortality.

Growth of the Baby

Most babies survive, develop normally and grow up healthy. Development of the human being in womb and after being born is according to two fundamental principles. Growth and motor development happen from top to bottom called the Cephalocaudal principle and from center of the body to outward called the Proximodistal principle. The embryo’s head can explain this, brain and eyes develop early and are larger till the remaining body develops. And also that
the parts of the body near the center develop faster than the far ones. Like the embryo’s head develop before the limbs, and the arms and legs before the fingers and toes.

Children in this babyhood stage grow faster. In the initial first year of babyhood the baby grows very fast. At 5 months the baby’s birth weight doubles and by one year the birth weight triples. The rapid growth reduces in the second year and in the third year adding about 5 pounds each year. The height of the baby increases by 10-12 inches in the first year. The increase in second and third year is 5 inches in each year. The growth in weight and height in the third year is lesser than the second year of babyhood.

The baby’s body shape changes too. Their head becomes proportionality smaller and most children become slimmer, the chubby, potbelly disappears. Nourishment becomes important, as the child needs to be weaned out of the breast milk after 6 months and started with a variety of balanced diet in semi-solid form.

**Early Childhood Stage**

Early childhood is from 3 to 6 years. This is the preschool years; the children are changing from toddlers to childhood. The children change in physical appearance, motor and mental abilities and their personalities become complex. The children in early childhood grow more slowly than in the earlier stage, but still at a fast pace. They slim down and shoot up. They develop their body muscles and improve on coordination. They improve their motor abilities like running, jumping and throwing. They require less sleep and also develop sleep problems too.

The children at 3 years begin to give up their chubby roundness and become slender, slim and athletic. The abdominal muscles improve so the potbelly decreases. The
arms and legs grow longer. The head is still larger and the other parts of the body are growing. The children increase in weight and height. On average children grow 2 to 3 inches a year and gain 4 to 6 pounds per year. The external and internal body parts are developing. Muscular and skeletal growth makes the children stronger. Bones become stronger protecting the internal organs. The brains and nervous system matures and coordinates, promotes and develops the motor abilities of the children. The respiratory and circulatory system improves and develops the immune system and thus making children stronger and healthier. When the child is 3 years all the milk teeth appear and the child can eat properly. The permanent teeth also develop which will appear later.

Diet
Good growth and health is possible if the child has a good diet. Children in early childhood eat less as compared to infants; this is because the growth of children are slower. The diet of children in this stage should include daily protein, which can be met by two glasses of milk, meat or fish, cheese or eggs. Vitamin A can come from carrots, spinach, egg yolk or whole milk. Vitamin C can be procured from citrus fruits, tomatoes and leafy dark green vegetables. Calcium for the bone growth can come from dairy products. It is important to observe body weight, as obese children tend to become obese adults.

Middle Childhood Stage
Middle childhood also called the school years extends from 6 to 12 years. Children in this stage develop more competence as they grow taller, heavier, and stronger, learn new skills and concepts and they can apply their knowledge and skills more effectively. Children in this stage also acquire the physical skills needed to participate in games and sports.
In this middle childhood stage, children grow on an average 1 to 3 inches taller each year and add on 5 to 8 pounds weight annually. When the children are 10 to 12 years the girls suddenly grow taller and gain approximately 10 pounds. The girls become taller and heavier than the boys of their age. Then suddenly at 12 to 13 the boys shoot up and leave the girls behind. The girl’s body has more fatty tissue as compared to the boys, which will remain with them even in adulthood.

The individual children’s growth rate and their size vary widely due to genetic factors and environmental diversities. Children are taller in countries not affected much by malnutrition and infectious diseases and children from richer homes are larger than their counterpart in poorer homes.

**Nutrition**

Children in this stage have a good appetite for their increase in growth and their hyperactivity. The children need 2400 calories and one-fourth of this should be consumed by a healthy balanced breakfast. This will make the children active, and alert in school. Large percentage of children suffer from mild to moderate malnutrition. This could affect the children’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Obesity in children in this stage is an emerging health issue across the world.

**Dental Care**

Almost all the adult teeth appear in this stage. The milk teeth drop off at approximately 6-7 years and they are replaced by the permanent teeth. On an average the first molars appear at 6 years, the second molars at 13 years and the third molars also called wisdom teeth appear in early twenties. There is an increased awareness in dental care so dental problems are controlled among children in this stage.
Physical Play

Children in this stage have better motor abilities; they are stronger, faster and well coordinated. Children enjoy physical play, trying out new techniques and skills to play. Children involve themselves in free play and also participate in rigorous activities that could be rough and tough.

Health and Fitness

Immunizations have made childhood a safe period of life. This stage accounts to the low death rate as compared to the other stages of the human life. It is important to be physically active to remain fit. It is noted that children who are not fit are those children who do not engage themselves in physical activities. Now-a-day diseases found in adulthood like diabetics and hypertension can be observed in childhood. Thus it is important to have healthy life style from childhood itself.

Adolescence Stage

In adolescence, the individual’s appearance changes as a result of the hormonal events of puberty. This results in a change in their thinking; emotions and they prepare themselves to adulthood. Adolescence starts at 12 or 13 and extends until the late teens. In this stage the beginning and the end is not clearly drawn. As adolescence begins with puberty. Puberty is the process when the individual has attained sexual maturity. The individual is capable to reproduce. In India according to law an individual is an adult at the age of 18, he or she can get a driving license, he or she can vote in the general election. But society will consider an individual an adult only after he or she is economically independent or chosen a career or has got married. The marriage age is 18 for woman and 21 for a man.
The beginning phase of adolescence is when the individual is adjusting from the childhood stage to the adolescence stage. This is the stage that Erickson calls identity vs. confusion. When the adolescent is experimenting, growing and building up his confidence and self esteem. The adolescent is looking for an identity for themselves. The adolescent is adjusting themselves to the bodily changes and to the societal demands. The stage can be rather confusing as the elders may tell the adolescent that they are grown up, no longer children and simultaneously also say that they are not grown up, no yet an adult.

**Puberty**

The biological changes that accompany puberty are fast growth in height and weights. There are other bodily changes. This shows that childhood has come to an end. The phase of puberty is triggered off when the pituitary gland that is situated at the base of the brain stimulates the sex glands, which results in excessive hormone secretion. There is no fixed age for this to happen. It differs from person to person depending on other factors like genes, health and environment of the particular person. In the woman the ovaries increase the production of estrogen hormone, which results in the growth of the female genitals and breast. In the man the testes increase the production of androgens, it is mainly testosterone that causes the growth of male genitals and body hair.

The beginning of puberty for boys and girls vary from person to person. The whole process takes roughly 4 years in both boys and girls. Girls start puberty changes at 8 to 10 years of age. In some cases it can be lower at 7 years while in others it could be as late as 14 years. In boys the beginning of puberty changes is 12 years but some boys could show signs at 9 years and others as late as 16 years. This variation in the puberty age for individual boys and girls are most likely due to the difference in standard of
living also. Children that are healthier, well fed and nourished mature faster and grow taller and bigger.

The adolescent suddenly grows in height and weight. This sudden growth starts in girls in the age 9 to 14 and in boys between 10 to 16 years of age. This growth spurt lasts for approximately two years and when it ends the individual gets sexual maturity. Girls are faster to enter this phase so grow taller and heavier faster but soon the boys catch up. Boys and girls also show difference in the growth pattern. A boy becomes overall big, his shoulders get wide, his legs and arms get longer and he increases in heights. The girl’s pelvis or abdomen widens and she puts on layers of fat getting little round in shape. This growth is also accompanied by changes in the skeletal and muscle of the adolescents. Eye grows and the lower jaw becomes longer and thicker, the nose also grows. Sometimes these growth are not proportionate. This results in teenagers looking unbalanced and clumsy.

**Primary and Secondary Sex Characteristics**

The primary sex characteristics are the changes in the sex organs that are linked to reproduction. In girls these organs are ovaries, uterus and vagina. In boys these organs are testes, prostate gland, penis and seminal vesicles. In Puberty these organs mature and become bigger in size. In boys the testes and scrotum are the first to enlarge while in girls the breasts grow and the nipples rise.

The secondary sex characteristics are the physical signs of sexual maturity. These are enlargement of breasts and growth of pubic hair and armpit hair in girls. In boys there is change in voice and skin texture, muscular development and growth of pubic, facial, armpit and body hair. The adolescent’s skin becomes coarser and oily. The increased activity of sebaceous gland causes pimples and blackheads.
Sperm Production

Males become sexually mature when sperm starts being produced in their body. By the age of 15 years 25% of boys have sperm in their urine. Boys experience wet dreams, which is an involuntary ejaculation of semen. Sometimes it is related to erotic dreams.

Menstruation

Girls become sexually mature when they start with menstruation. The first menstruation is named menarche. Menstruation is the monthly shedding of tissue from the lining of the womb. Menstruation starts almost 2 years after breasts develop and uterus has started to grow and just after the bodily growth has slowed down. It could vary from 10 to 16 years of age. Menarche is the transition from a girl to a woman. Girls if prepared before hand will be positive towards menarche though the negative side is the discomfort and embarrassment that may be experienced by most girls.

Adolescent girls and boys need information from parents, teachers or health professionals about the bodily changes they are going through so that they are not negative towards what is happening to them. So that they know they are normal and do not loss their confidence.

Young Adulthood Stage

Earlier it was taken that growth and development comes to a standstill after adolescence. Now we know there are changes in adulthood but these are very slow and less observable than in the previous stages like childhood and adolescence. Now there will be some decline too. Young adulthood is the two decades from 20 to 40 years of age. These years are important and they lay the foundation for the later developments. This is the stage when individuals leave their parents, settle with a job and marry and become
parents themselves. Important decisions are taken in this stage that affect heir health, family, career, success and happiness in the future years. The eating, drinking and exercise pattern, whether they smoke? How do they manage stress? These also affect their present and future functioning. Thus this stage is important as the success of the remaining stages depend on how well the young adults manage and organize this stage.

**Biological Development in Adulthood**

Young adulthood is the stage when the individual is at the best of their abilities, strength, energy and endurance. The body functions are fully developed. The senses are sharpest. Visual acuity is keenest, taste; smell and sensitivity to pain and temperature are functioning to the best of their abilities. Only hearing loss could be experienced, especially for high-pitched sounds.

**Health of Young Adult**

The health status of young adult is generally good. Most of them usually do not have any serious health problems. Health depends on the life style, diet and exercise pattern of the individuals. Individuals have to work towards a healthy life style following simple steps like eating balanced and regular meals, exercising for a minimum 30 minutes daily, sleeping for 7 hours every night, no smoking and drinking moderately. Balanced diet keeps the young adult physically and mentally fit. Individuals in this stage should be careful not to consume extra cholesterol, as this will affect their heart.

Women are more vulnerable at this stage as this is usually the period that she gets pregnant and has babies. Now-a-days medical facilities have improved, women are getting the medical attention but Indian women are still suffering from medical problems and require special attention.
Middle Adulthood Stage

Middle adulthood is the years between 40 and 65 years. Middle age also means a person with grown up children and elderly parents. The grown up children have left home for education, career or married off. But in today’s times some individuals are having their babies in forties. It can also be observed that sometime persons aged 50 years who exercise and eat healthy they could look and on biological factors be younger than a 35 year old person.

In adulthood the sensory and motor changes are very gradual and suddenly in middle adulthood the person experiences that he cannot read without glasses or that their feet are not as fast as they used to be. Middle adulthood person experience visual problems like farsightedness, sensitivity to light. They need bifocal eyeglasses. Some may also experience gradual hearing loss. Senses of taste and smell begin to decline in this stage; this could be because of medication. As taste buds are less sensitive food may taste bland. The middle-aged person may feel painless and could also be less tolerant towards their pains. Strength and coordination also show a slow decline. Many people may feel the back muscles weakening. Simple reaction time that is responses to the stimuli goes slower by 20 per cent. But this does not mean there is any poor performance on the part of the middle-aged persons. Knowledge based on experience makes up for the physical changes.

Sexual Functioning

The decline in reproductive capacity affect men and women in different manners. Women reaches the age when she no longer can bear children, but men can still continue to be fertile. Though fertility decreases and erection could be reduced.
Menopause

When the woman stops ovulation and menstruation the woman cannot get pregnant naturally, this stage is called menopause. Women reach menopause at the age of 45 to 55. There is a phase of 2 to 5 years when the woman’s body undergoes physiological changes that prepares for menopause is called climacteric. The menstruation is not regular every month. The psychological and emotional problems associated with menopause are more due to the sociological view of aging. Problems that are experienced by women are vaginal dryness, burning, itching, vaginal and urinary infection and urinary dysfunction due to tissue shrinkage. Women could also report of joint or muscle pain, headache, insomnia and fatigue.

Late Adulthood Stage

Late adulthood stage comes in when a person crosses 65 years of age. It is sometimes observed that persons at 65 years or 75 years or 85 years do not feel or behave old. Though the retirement age is at 60 or 65 years but some may still keep on working. Adults enjoy good physical and mental health even though they show a decline is their capacities. Death becomes a destination close by for the late adults.

It is important to note that nutrition, exercise, sanitation and environmental pollution together control health and disease. Healthy life style help today’s young and middle to have good physical functioning. Healthy aging affect the physical functioning in many ways.

The Brain Decline

Normally healthy older persons exhibit lesser changes in their functioning. The brain starts changes in their functioning. The brain starts losing weight from 30 years of age. The brain has lost unto 10 per cent of its weight by
the time the person reaches 90 years of age. There is loss in neurons (nerve cells) in the cerebral cortex. There is slowing down of the information processing so older persons ask others to repeat information.

**Vision**

Most elderly have vision impairment. Glasses help the older people to see properly. Driving should be avoided, especially at night. Cataract is a common problem among the elderly.

**Hearing**

Almost 50 per cent of late adults have hearing loss that affect with their daily life. Hearing aids can be very useful.

**Taste and Smell**

Losses in taste and smell is very common among the late adults. The number of taste bud reduce making food very bland thus many elders eat very spicy food. The brain that is operational for smell could have shrunk which causes less of sensitivity to smells.

**Sexual Activity**

Persons who have active sexual lives in their younger days continue to enjoy sexual activity in their older days. But men and women suffer from sexual decline too. The man’s erection is smaller and less firm and woman’s vagina are less flexible and lack lubrication.

**Other Physical Changes**

The individuals in late adulthood are observed with skin that is pale and as fat and muscle vanish, the skin wrinkles. Varicose vein of legs are common. Hair becomes gray and thin the persons reduce in height by an inch or two. Their posture also stoops. Women have osteoporosis, which causes bone fracture. The back could also develop a hump.
As the age increases, the body systems and organs become vulnerable to disease. The heart rhythm becomes slower and irregular, fat deposits cause blood pressure. Elderly sleep less and wake at night to pass urine and then cannot get sleep. The older adults remain active and can do their own activities at their own pace and strength. Strength, Coordination and Reaction time is also on the decline. Older persons can do all the things that the young person can do, but it is much slower.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter you learnt about the biological development in different stages of human growth and development from conception to the death of the human life. We started with the formation of a new life, how does conception occur? Then we had a step-by-step explanation on all the biological aspects of human growth and development of the human life till birth. This also includes the decline in the human abilities due to aging.

**References**


Introduction

Family is considered the bastion of human civilization. It forms an essential part of human evolution, without which existence of societies would have not been possible in the present form today. Philosophers and social scientists have noted that society is a structure made up of families and characteristics of a given society can be studied by looking at the pattern, functioning and structure of family. One of the primary reasons for evolution of the institution of family is to provide protection and nurturance to infant and children who are perhaps the most helpless creatures at the time of birth.

The family as a social institution is formally developed in all societies. It is taken as the primary unit of socialization. It forms the considerable part of an individual’s identity. It shapes the personality of its members especially children and inculcates skills to deal with social environment. It provides safety, security, love and affection to its members.

The institution of family is a universal phenomenon, though with varying patterns, types, composition and functions. Over the years societies, globally, have witnessed change in family patterns. The recent phenomena of globalization and consumerism have created new and diverse forms of family and household. There is emergence of a gradual trend from extended families to nuclear
families due to growing urbanization and industrialization. We have greater proportion of single parent families than ever before. The family system is taking newer forms to adapt to the growing demands of changing social situations. Before going into the details of concept, composition and typology of families, let us take a look at another related and quite significant social institution — marriage — that is taken as the beginning of a family life cycle.

Marriage between a man and a woman is considered as the basis of formation of family from time immemorial. With the birth of a child a family is considered fully constituted. Nature has given the capability to reproduce asexually to only a few organisms like amoebae and most species including homosapions (humans) reproduce sexually. Marriage is the social sanction to establish sexual relations with spouse and reproduce to maintain continuity of the family lineage and, in turn, society.

Thus, marriage is a social sanction for procreation, which is an important function of family. There are many rituals and ceremonies associated with marriage that differ from religion to religion and culture to culture. It may be noted that marriage as a social contract puts many roles and responsibilities in front of the couple, which in larger context are controlled by the patriarchal or matriarchal social structures. Marriage is not an integral part of human nature, but it is a man made custom or institution which was present even in pre-historic times. It is not a natural relationship but an obligation between a man and a woman. With the advancement of civilization, marriage became a social function with religious and legal sanctions.

Therefore, marriage is a system in which human sexuality is socialized. This has made social life possible, by creating a base for smaller units of society — the family. Human
beings derive a lot from their families and are socialized to perform various roles in the larger social environment. To begin a family life, a woman and a man marry each other. The purpose of marriage ceremonies in any society is to let the community and society know about the alliance and protect it. Family and marriage, as social institutions are meant to fulfill many needs of the human being like providing security, affection, love, care, belongingness, identity and worth.

**Family: Meaning and Functions**

Let us look at some of the characteristic features of ‘family’. The family is not merely a biological group; it is primarily a social institution. Its members are governed by rules and regulations. The behaviour of its members is not motivated by instincts but by customs, which prescribe the standards of family behaviour.

The family is composed of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption. The bond between husband and wife is that of marriage and the relationship between parents and children is generally that of blood, though sometimes of adoption.

The members of a family typically live together under one roof and constitute a single household. If they stay apart they consider the household their ‘home’. The definition of a household is a group of persons residing in the same place and constituting a single housekeeping unit.

The family is composed of persons who interact and communicate with each other in their social roles such as husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister. The roles are defined by social expectations but in each family they are powerfully reinforced by feelings arising out of experiences within the family itself and from one’s parental family. It is considered
the basic unit of society, to meet the needs of individuals and those of other societal institutions.

The family maintains a common culture. It is derived mainly from the general culture, but each family has some distinctive features.

**Types of family:** families may be classified based on descent, location of residence and authority. On the basis of descent, families are classified as *patrilineal* and *matrilineal*. The place of residence of couple after marriage — either with or near the husband’s or the wife’s parents — classifies families as *patrilocal* or *matrilocal*. In *neolocal* families, husband and wife live separately from their respective families and start their ‘new’ household unit. A more significant classification is the patriarchal or matriarchal family. In the *patriarchal* family the members are under the authority of the father and trace descent through him. In *matriarchal* family, members of the extended family live together under the authority of the mother and trace descent through the mother.

The family may have different configurations like conjugal, nuclear, joint, which are commonly called ‘normative’ family patterns. The conjugal family denotes the husband-wife unit. The nuclear family is defined as the husband and wife with unmarried children. The joint family includes three generations living together — husband, wife with married children, their spouse, unmarried children, grandparents, etc.

It may be noted that with time the definition of family also kept on changing. Stated otherwise, family as an institution has changed itself in terms of typology, composition, roles and functions. In ancient times, only joint family groups would qualify to be called as ‘family’ and then with forces of social change like urbanization, industrialization, joint family groups gave way to nuclear family system. At present
various ‘alternate’ family groups (other than normative family patterns) are also emerging with different roles and functions. These may be single parent families, women headed families, childless families, adoptive families, dual earner families, to mention a few. In the light of changing structure and functions of the families, the United Nations in 1994, defines this social institution as —

The family may be broadly perceived as a unit of two or more persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or consensual unions. Thus, ‘consensual unions’ also have been included to fit in all emerging alternate family forms like single parent families, adoptive families, only grandparent-grandchild family, live-in relationships, same sex families along with various normative family structures.

Thus, family is a highly dynamic concept. As a social institution, family has consisted of more or less formal rules and regulations, organized around the fulfillment of societal needs. It has historically been an integral part of the ethnic community, which has promoted patriarchy in the family.

**Marriage: Meaning and Purpose**

Marriage may be defined as a socially sanctioned union of man with woman to perform the roles of husband and wife. The term marriage has different meanings and connotations for different people. To some, marriage is a relationship between man and woman for propagation of human species. Some people take it as license for sex. Yet another group considers marriage as companionship, love and intimacy.

Marriage is development of one of the most unique and versatile relationships of human life. It offers an opportunity for life-long companionship, belongingness
and support. It fulfills need for sex, intimacy, love and affection. From society’s perspective, it is division of roles and responsibilities for procreation and socialization of children and running a family.

Indian views on marriage have all the more dimensions. Marriage is a sacrament, with religious and moral obligations on one hand and social and economic on the other. Hindu concept of marriage is that it is a sanskar or dharma — a holy union of the two souls and not simply of two bodies. It is considered an indissoluble bond that could be broken only by death. Marriage has been taken as a ceremonial gift of the bride by her father, or other appropriate relative, to the bride groom in order that both may together fulfill their duties which is necessary for human existence. Further, Islam says that marriage is an institution ordained for the protection of the society and in order that human beings may guard themselves from foulness and unchastity. In Islam, marriage is more often a civil contract, the objectives of which are the promotion of normal family life and the legalization of children. Among Christians, marriage has been viewed as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of others, thus, stressing on monogamy.

Marriage has legal aspects also. Legal sanction of marriage is based on prevailing social norms and customs. It varies from one society to another. In India, legal minimum age for marriage is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys.

Thus, marriage, according to religious and sociological literature, is a union of two persons of different sexes to life long reciprocal possession of their sexual qualities, which aims at fulfilling the individual’s biological, emotional, social and spiritual needs. Most often marriage as a bond begins with accomplishment of different rituals and ceremonies.
Some practical purposes or utilitarian aspects of marriage may well be delineated. It ensures security to women who have to undergo long periods of pregnancy and to the newborn offspring. It keeps family roles and functions intact. It ensures stability to society and simplifies blood relationships.

According to Koos, a sociologist, marriage is a dividing line between the family of orientation and family of procreation in terms of the nature of roles one performs in the two families. The roles in the family of orientation vary in infancy, childhood and adolescence and carry no responsibilities and obligations. However, the roles one performs in the family of procreation after marriage as a husband/wife, a father/mother, a bread-earner, a grandfather/grandmother, a retired person, etc., have different expectations and obligations.

In India, marriages are usually classified as: marriage by free choice of the partners or love marriage, arranged marriage and forced/arranged marriage. They can further be classified as monogamous or polygamous; civil, religious or customary.

Based on the number of partners, marriage may be mainly categorized into two—monogamy and polygamy. **Monogamy** is marriage between one man and one woman. This form has high social, legal and religious appreciation. **Polygamy**, which means plurality of husband/wife, includes polygyny, polyandry, Levirate and Sorrorate. **Polygyny** is marrying more than one female. Religious and civic sets of rules and laws have sanctioned conditioned polygamous marriages like wife not being able to produce sons, maladjusted nature of wife, etc. **Polyandry** is a marriage in which one woman marries more than one man. This is more common practice among Todas and Kotas of Nilgiris
in South India. Polyandry may be fraternal or non-fraternal. In **fraternal** polyandry, the husbands are all brothers or cousins from the father’s side. In the case of **non-fraternal** polyandry, they are not related as seen among Nairs of Kerala. **Levirate** is a form of polygamous marriage in which man marries wife of late elder brother or even during the lifetime of elder brother. This form has been seen among the Ahirs of Haryana, Jats and Gujars and some other castes in Uttar Pradesh. In **Sorrorate** form of marriage, wives of a man are invariably the sisters. It is generally observed among Nagas, Gonds and Baigas of India. This form is also practiced when wife is unable to procreate or dead.

**Family and Marriage: Implications for Social Work Professionals**

Family has a historical-idealistic connotation. It is visualized as a link between continuity and change. It is a major source of nurturance, emotional bonding and socialization. It provides security and care to its members, socializes the child from a physical being to social being and meets the basic and developmental needs of family members. It has the major potential to provide stability and support when there are problems from the environment.

Family in India is often understood as an ideal homogenous unit with strong coping mechanisms. However, it is important to recognize that there may be inherent problems within the family. Moreover, families in a large and culturally diverse country like India, have plurality of forms that vary with class, ethnicity and individual choices.

Sociologists and social scientists, of late, have begun to question romanticizing of family as merely an idealistic, universal, everlasting source of nurturance, emotional
bonding and support. In juxtaposition, family may also be a source of inequality, exploitation and violence. There may be inherent and perpetual discriminations and exploitation against some of the family members. Often democratic values, equality and equity are not found consistently with most families.

In the patriarchal structure of the family, roles and responsibilities and control and distribution of resources are strictly determined by age and gender. Control over resources and assumptions of superiority give the man the authority to make decisions about his dependents, which would mainly include women and children. Subordination of women and thereby gender discrimination has remained an integral reality of most family practices — child marriage, dowry demands, sati, celebration of a birth of a boy child, female foeticide, infanticide, father as a natural guardian and so on. Individuals and families who deviate from the ethnic norms of their community often face ostracism.

Patriarchy generally leads to patriliny and patrilocality, which separate the women from their natal family home after marriage. Women often do not have the title to the matrimonial home in which she concentrates all her time and energy. In case of death of her husband or desertion or divorce, she is often rendered destitute as she neither has a home in her family of marriage nor in her natal family, which has given her away.

Even in matrilineal and matrilocal cultures, patriarchy seems to be prevalent in the form of power held by the brother and not by the woman herself.

The institution of marriage and the event of child bearing are considered so essential for family life, that couple staying together without marriage, the single parent families are not accepted as complete or normal families.
Thus, the family has not been a cradle for nurturing democratic values. In fact, the child gets socialized into the concepts of inequality by gender and age in the name of familism. Even women ingest the patriarchal values to be timid, submissive, docile, and dependent since early childhood.

Besides the family members, patriarchy is also internalized by the community, the society and the state. It, therefore, affects all the spheres of our life and not just the family life. The need for a democratic family structure is a major challenge for the families and not just for the women.

For social work professionals, there is a need to look at these institutions of family and marriage not only in idealistic terms, but critically evaluate their roles, functions in the context of democratic values and human rights perspective. The social workers should realize that family and marriage have great potential for ensuring well-being of individual members. At the same time, they may perpetuate discrimination and oppression for some family members.

Social work professionals should accept the diversity of forms, composition and types of family thereby avoiding biases and discriminations that may arise on account of rigid beliefs about ‘family’. They may, first of all, aim at a family for every individual, unless an adult leaves it by choice. Second, they may aim at a democratic family with scope for the development of individual members and enriched family relationships. Third, they need a democratic environment for the family with scope for the development of the families with harmonious family ecology. Achievement of these goals would strengthen the family unit and prevent exploitation, disintegration and destitution of families and their members.
Family Assessment and Intervention

It is an undisputed assumption that dysfunctional or maladjusted family processes adversely affect mental health and social functioning of individuals. Social work professionals are, more often than not, required to interact with the family during their interventions for helping the clients to resolve conflicts, be it case work, group situation or other methods of social work practice as family is universally present and assessment as well as intervention are hardly complete without involvement of clients’ family. There have been several models of studying family but the most widely used one is ‘system’s approach’.

The general System paradigm is the most popular and important theoretical framework that provides a comprehensive structure for understanding functioning of the family. According to Systems Theory, family is a system, comprised of various sub-systems, which basically, are the dyads (husband-wife, parent-child, siblings, grandparent-grandchild). Family is also a part of larger system that is social environment and includes work place, health care and education system, ethnic community, legal system, geographical ecology, political system, etc. It is assumed that any change in one part of the system has effects on other sub-systems or systems. This is applicable both within the family and with respect to outside environment.

The following schema represents the conceptual framework for family as a social system. It depicts that family is a dynamic system and interacts with other systems in the social environment such as economic system, political system, ethnic community, neighbourhood, etc. The dotted lines represent that systems are not closed rather information can pass through the semi-permeable membrane of the system. It may be noted that family in the social environment do not passively receive
information, rather its presence may influence other systems also.

The social work professionals working with families need to have the holistic perspective of family assessment and intervention. A social worker in school setting handling the case of a boy showing scholastic backwardness and inability to submit school fees may just counsel the boy and recommend waving off the fees or may take a wider perspective, pay home visits and try to find out the real cause of problem using system’s approach. The social worker on enquiry may find that boy’s parents do not share a congenial relation and often have heated arguments. On further probe of reasons for frequent fights between the couple, the social worker may find that the problem is with workplace system where the father of the child is given notice to leave the job and he may be in constant
tension of what will happen to the family if he becomes unemployed. Therefore, we note that having holistic perspective helps to reach to the real cause of problems. Using system’s approach, we find that problem in one system (here problem with father’s work place) will have repercussions on other systems (husband-wife relationship, child’s school). The social work interventions would automatically depend on the assessment of the problem.

Based on the system’s approach, Hartman & Laird (1983) proposed the ecological perspective of family centred social work practice that is a holistic scheme of family assessment. This is visualized as a process whereby the social worker, along with family, would identify the areas of intervention and outline the role of various systems, including the social worker himself/herself to rectify the gap and for family rehabilitation and protection of family rights. In order to have a holistic family assessment, the social worker would study the family norms, functions, time spent together, space (physical and psychological), decision-making, parenting style, sensitivity to the developmental needs of the individual family members and adaptability.

The social worker would also study the interaction of the family with the outside social environment. Any dysfunctional interaction of one or more individual family members with outside social environment needs to be studied. A Hindu family staying in a Muslim moholla in Gujarat may have problems of various kinds with volatile political system. Similarly a family migrated from South of India may face problems in interaction with social environment due to lingual and socio-cultural differences.

In order to have holistic family assessment, three broad areas identified are:
Concept of Family and Marriage

- Socialization of family norms
- Family environment
- Family dynamics

**Socialization of Family Norms**

Assessment of socialization of family norms includes examination of family's functions, patterns, structure and practices. There can be various situations in the family that reflect the discrimination against and exploitation of individual family members — families where an individual based on age or sex is denied of the opportunity for health and development need intervention — girl child not sent to school while boys are sent, an elderly waits for medical help while money is being spent on buying television to meet the recreational needs of younger members, authoritarian eldest male of the family fixing up marriage of son matching the caste and social status and ignoring son’s willingness to marry the girl of his choice. The family may not be having democratic values and practices, thereby not involving womenfolk in the decision-making. Wife battering may be a socialized and internalized facet of a family. Child marriage, not allowing womenfolk to use family planning methods, decision of expanding or not expanding family size may be taken exclusively and only by males, thereby exploiting the females of the household — all these and many similar situations signify that family is not a safe and secured haven for all the family members and their rights are ignored and denied. This calls for social work intervention.

**Family’s Environment**

The family’s interactions with the environment may be examined with the following aspects in mind: ethnic, regional and urban/rural background, interactions with the political, economic systems, education and work systems, land, housing, health and welfare systems,
ecological systems, legal systems and the like. If the family's or its individual member's needs are not met by the environment or their rights with reference to the environment are not protected, the family or the individual is in a state of conflict with its environment. Some of the examples of families coming in conflict with their social environment may be as follows: families of landless labourers in a village dominated by upper caste Hindus who exploit the former on the basis on their economic, social and political power, families with HIV afflicted member(s) facing social ostracism, poor migrant families coming to mega cities in search of work and facing problems in making both ends meet. It also includes families that come in conflict with social and cultural values and norms like families with unwed mothers. Social work intervention is also required with families who come in conflict with the political and ecological systems such as those have been uprooted during the formation of Narmada Dam to the existing height.

**Assessment of Family Dynamics**

Study of family dynamics may cover the following aspects about family as a system and its sub-systems:

**Cohesion:** It denotes the intimacy and depth of a relationship. Enmeshed relationships are considered unsatisfactory as it does not leave space for individuality. Too much emotional dependence is not taken as appropriate. Similarly, disengaged relationships have lesser of intimacy and more of conflicts, which again is a problem aspect. The recommended cohesion is 'separated-connected' type, which is a perfect blend of inter-dependence and individuality.

**Communication:** It is obvious that negative communication patterns often bring bitterness and conflicts in relations. As social work professionals, we
should study the communication pattern of the family members that may be contributing to tensions and conflicts in the family.

**Role performance:** All the family members perform certain roles at various stages of family life cycle. In families following patriarchal social norms often women have to shoulder many responsibilities of household management, childcare and may be drained out. There may be conflict among family members related to their roles. Situations resulting in role strain and/or role conflicts of individual members call for social work interventions.

**Decision-making:** Decision-making is a crucial indicator of democracy and status in the family. Practice of autocratic decision-making is not considered healthy for family relationships. Democratic decision making process provides feeling of belongingness and worthiness.

**Adaptability:** This refers to the ability to interact with other social systems in the environment. It is assumed that family as a social system has semi-permeable membrane that allows selected information and resources to pass through the system. Rigid adaptability patterns of family members often creates unnecessary resistance in passing through the information and resources while chaotic adaptability patterns do not offer the needed check on passage of information and resources. Both rigid and chaotic adaptability patterns are considered problematic for adequate family functioning.

**Success in carrying out individual members’ developmental tasks:** Family has the major responsibility to facilitate individual members in achieving their developmental tasks, be it an infant, an adolescent or an elderly. Families that delay or fail to carry out these required developmental tasks need social work intervention.
Basic Social Science Concepts

The social worker may identify dysfunctional dynamics and work towards the following:

- Bringing the family cohesion to the levels of separated and connected
- Engaging positive communication patterns
- Facilitating role performance
- Encouraging democratic decision-making patterns
- Structuring the family’s adaptability pattern or making it flexible as the need may be
- Helping achievement of developmental tasks of individual members.

Conclusion

Family is a formally developed social institution that exists universally. It is the primary socializing unit of society. It is an important function of an individual’s identity and personality. It meets the needs of survival (in early years), security, love and affection.

Marriage is a socially sanctioned union of man and woman that is considered the beginning of family life cycle. It is meant for regulation of sexual behaviour and procreation and rearing of children. Types of marriages (monogamy, polygamy) were discussed.

Under the advent of social change, alternate family forms like women headed families, single parent families, live-in relationships are also emerging along with existence of normative family patterns like joint and nuclear families. Definition of ‘family’ also changed and recent definition includes any consensual union as family. Rights of families and rights of individuals with regard to family were also discussed. Families are categorized on the basis of lineage.
(patrilineal and matrilineal), locus (patrilocal, matrilocal and neolocal) and descent (patriarchal and matriarchal).

Social work professionals must not perceive family as an ideal everlasting source of nurturance, love and support. It may also be a source of perpetual discriminations and exploitation against some of the family members. Patriarchal family structure has contributed to gender discrimination, exploitation and abuse in numerous ways. Family assessment and intervention model was discussed in the general system's paradigm. Family is much more than just the sum of all the family members staying together. Individual members’ interaction patterns, attitudes, values, goals, communication pattern, and many other factors influence family functioning. Three board areas of holistic family assessment were discussed — socialization of family norms included studying family’s functions, patterns, structure and practices, study of family's environment comprised of looking at interaction of family with outside social systems like ethnic, regional and urban/rural background, political, economic, education, health, welfare, legal system, etc., and assessment of family dynamics includes cohesion, communication, role performance, decision-making, adaptability and the like.

**References**


Introduction

Imagine yourself walking a roadside and you observe a person coming towards you — what would be your first observation? Is the person seemingly Hindu, Muslim or Christian or rich or poor, Brahmin or from lower caste? No, certainly not! Your first observation would be whether the person approaching is a male or a female. Sex is the prime distinguishing factor among humans while age, caste, and religion come at the secondary place. Both men and women belong to the species of homo-sapiens and they are equally human. However, there are certain biological differences between them and inferring from these are many social and emotional differences that have resulted in stereotypes, biases, discriminations and even exploitation.

Social structure (patriarchal or matriarchal) and related norms, values, roles and expectations have given rise to many real and unreal differences between both the sexes. In this Chapter we would try to understand how social structure, social systems and institutions have influenced our perception to look at both the sexes and develop our expectations. In fact, having differential attributes and personality dispositions does not facilitate or impede well-being of either sex. Problem begins when we rank these attributes, for instance — feminine qualities like receptivity, gentleness, caring, tenderness, warmth, etc., are graded
lower than masculine qualities like adventurism, being sturdy, aggressive, commanding, controlling, authoritative, muscular, robust, and the like. Accepting differential masculine and feminine qualities, without ranking them would have gone a long way in making an egalitarian, fair, happy and contented society a reality.

Ranking of feminine and masculine qualities, has led to development of prejudices, biases, stigma, discrimination and a perpetual conflict between both the sexes. Certain terms used in this context, may well be clarified. Sex is a biological attribute of being male or female based on reproductive anatomy while gender is used to denote the social dimension of being a man or a woman. It is sexual identity, especially in relation to society and culture. Similarly, the behavioural, cultural or social traits associated with males are known as masculine qualities and those connected with females are called feminine attributes. Gender stereotypes present a conventionally standardized conception or image concerning the typical social roles of male and female, both domestically and socially. Stated differently, gender stereotypes are beliefs held about characteristics, traits, and activity-domains that are ‘deemed’ appropriate for men and women. For example, traditionally, typical characteristics for women are piety, submissiveness, and domesticity, while authority, and social behavior, are traits commonly held by men. However, as the product of social activity, gender stereotypes are neither perpetual nor static. Let us now understand salient physical differences between men and women and its propositions.

Physical Differences and Implications

Sexual differentiation is a biological process. It provides the basis of human reproduction. Genetically, out of 23 pairs of chromosomes in a fertilized egg, the 23rd pair is
known as the sex chromosome. This chromosome determines the sex of the unborn child. In this pair, the X chromosome comes always from the female and the other X or Y chromosome comes from the male. If the chromosome from father is X, the baby is going to be a girl and if it is Y, it is going to be a boy. Thus, the fact is that father is responsible for the sex of the child. However, in patriarchal society like India, for centuries, woman has been held responsible if she fails to deliver a baby boy. The craze of boy is so much that some men do not hesitate to marry second time considering that his first wife is biologically infertile to bear a boy. Social stigma is manifested in numerous ways, from verbal abuses to complete desertion by husband, if a woman fails to bear a son.

In India, sex ratio is among the lowest in the world — just 921 females per 1000 males. One of the reasons for this pervasive sex discrimination is detection of sex of the foetus and if it happens to be a girl, then going for abortions. Stopping this kind of practice is among the biggest challenges in front of social workers.

It may be noted that genital sex (e.g. sexual organs) can be altered through surgery, though the genetic sex (the sex chromosomes) remains the same. For example, through surgery and hormone treatment, a man may be made to look like a woman, but his sex chromosomes will remain XY. Every cell of his body will have the XY mark. Thus genetically, a person’s composition can never be changed. Going for sex change, is no longer unheard of. There is a lot of scope for social work intervention in this area.

Let us now pay attention to some of the salient physical differences after birth. At the time of birth, both boys and girls are very similar. Until puberty, there are no significant differences between an average girl and a boy. At adolescence, sex hormones begin to play their roles more
clearly. The major sex hormones in males are androgens, the most dominant being testosterone. The chief female hormones are estrogens and progesterone. Categorizing these hormones into male and female hormones is actually misleading. Both sexes produce both hormones and it is only a matter of difference in degree and amount of secretion.

During puberty a girl is slightly shorter than the average boy. Girls reach puberty approximately up to two years before boys. In other words, girls’ adolescent growth begins first. During the adolescent growth spurt, the rate at which boys gain body fat slows down, while girls continue to accumulate fat steadily, especially on their torso or trunk. At adolescence, the sexes begin to diverge physically. There are marked developments in the genital organs and breasts. Puberty finishes for the average boy at 14 ½, while girls have their first menstruation (menarche) relatively late in puberty.

There are a lot of myths and misconceptions associated with menarche and menstrual cycle of females. With onset of menarche, a girl is considered ‘ready’ for ‘reproduction’. Often, in some parts of India, child marriage and early pregnancy take a heavy toll of health of adolescent girls. Menstruation is considered ‘an impure’ stage when females are not allowed to perform prayers, enter places of worship or, at times, even cook food.

It may be noted that, for simplifying the complex issues under study, we might categorize growth and development in a person at physical, social, sexual and emotional levels, but in reality a person’s behaviour is the outcome of all these dimensions. Changes at the physical level would have social and emotional consequences and vice versa. Here, we would be dealing with only those aspects of personality that have physiological origin.
Adolescence is often considered the phase of crisis — at physiological, social and emotional levels. At around puberty, child is confused about the rapid changes in the body due to physical and sexual growth. This contributes to change in their behaviour too — adolescent children generally become irritable and have mood swings. It is often seen that, more often than not, girl child is socialized to be submissive and timid, never encouraged to share her sexual issues or even health related issues with family members. During adolescence too, lack of knowledge about sexuality often does more harm than any help. Females are made to develop indifferent attitude towards their health and they are made to believe that role of sexuality in our life is only for procreation purposes. Even among males, assertive females are seen with suspicion. Similarly, adolescent boys are culturally not encouraged to know about sexuality issues yet should be skillful enough to successfully deal with problems in their sex life.

Research brings out that average man is bigger and stronger than the average woman. The height of the average man is greater than that of the average woman. An average adult male is 30% stronger than that of average woman. He can run faster, has more stamina than she has. The average woman has smaller shoulder, larger hips, more fat and a smaller limb to body-length ratio than the average man. However, it may not be inferred that women, therefore, are weaker sex. One, only physical strength cannot be the sole indicator of superiority of males. Women have shown considerable level of mental strength in tolerating pains while giving birth to a child. The degree and intensity of pains during child birth is rated as the maximum, which most women go through while becoming mother. Secondly, for centuries together, women have been socialized in a particular way (for not doing the strenuous physical labour, but in household management), cumulative effect of which is seen in their lower levels of
physical strength (please recall Darwin’s theory: organs and functions in the body which are not used, get extinguished in the course of evolution). So, social roles offered to females have major contribution in lower physical strength among females, only if we consider forces like weight lifting, pushing, pulling, etc. Stamina is found to be much more among women than men, which is reflected in the number of hours, majority of women put in while doing their household as well as economic chores. Thirdly, women’s bodies, depending upon the roles they performed in society adapted for the purpose of reproduction. More fat in women’s body is as a backup of energy during pregnancy and lactation period. Nature provides for any contingency like poverty, starvation, when mother is not able to have adequate intake, body uses this stored fat to provide energy to child and mother.

The argument given above also breaks the myth that females cannot be athlete. Nature and nurture, both play equally important roles. Girls trained to do hard strenuous work along with quality food are found to perform exceptionally well in athletics too.

**Psychological and Emotional Differences**

It is often believed that women are bundles of emotions. Apparently, they are guided by emotions and feelings, while men follow reasoning and logic. Do these patterns of emotional expressions have any biological base?

Let us first understand what are emotions. Emotions are related to feelings — they are said to be strong expressions of feelings. A child is born with three emotions — joy, misery and anger. Later on with increasing age, these three basic emotions branch out and differentiate into variety of emotions. More often than not, how to deal with emotions is not a conscious part of socialization at home or formal
schooling. We just teach children socially appropriate behaviour (for example, not to show anger in front of elders, guests, etc) that most of the time calls for suppression of emotions. In the case of females, they are socialized to be vulnerable, docile and highly emotional. Showing temper tantrums may be interpreted as a sign of aggression in a boy and lack of modesty in a girl.

Let us specifically look at the phenomenon of crying. It is observed that everywhere in the world adult women cry more than adult men. Quiet interestingly, as infants, there is no difference between male and female in the matter of crying. If at all, there is a little difference and it is boys who cry more than girls. The reason why adult women cry more than adult men, therefore, must lie somewhere between infancy and adulthood, or in adulthood itself. Researches bring out that this difference among adults is partly because of social conditioning. Men are not at all expected to shed tears or cry. Tears are taken as a sign of weakness and helplessness and how can men be considered weak and helpless. On the other hand, crying and weeping it is an acceptable part of being feminine. Added to this, there is also a little biological reason for this tendency. It is seen that some women are more prone to tears when their hormone levels fall at the end of menstrual cycle. But crying on the part of women is not restricted to that time. It cannot account for tears at other times. Crying may not be a bad way of expressing emotions for men too, if it is required. Stereotypes, however, become a block to men behaving naturally in this manner. Cumulative effect of suppression of emotions may lead to neurosis and other mental ailments. No wonder, as Freud correctly observed, the price we pay for being ‘civilized’ is neurosis.

Many psychologists believe that it is good for women that they are expected to cry and weep as it helps in catharsis
of emotions and they come out of the gloom fresh and light. In fact, many psychologists go to the extent of saying that women look more pretty and innocent like children because they can freely do catharsis of emotions while men are supposed to be sturdy and emotionally indifferent, though, inside they may be going through emotional turmoil.

In many studies, women emerge as more anxious, moody and emotional than men. Suppression of expressions such as anger, frustration, despair, etc., perhaps makes women more anxious. Society expects women to be fearful and anxious but not men. Men are supposed to be tough and not anxious and fearful. The stereotypes are so strong that if a male (boy or man) expresses fearfulness or cries or sheds tears, immediately the significant others utter, “don’t behave (cry) like girls/women”. Further, when women are said to be more emotional, it is stated in a negative sense. However, stressing much only on negative aspects of emotionality is not the right approach. There are positive aspects of being emotional. Girls are found to be more empathetic and caring than boys.

There are contradictory findings regarding the emotionality of women: some researches report that women are more prone to anxiety and are more emotional than men, other empirical data do not support this impression. It may, therefore, be inferred that girls are trained to be fearful and emotional. It has been observed that even psychiatrists and psychologists are often carriers of this social stereotype and they often ‘see’ and ‘observe’ more emotions in women.

One reason for over-emotionality among women is attributed to their monthly cycle or menstruation. This is a wide-spread belief, not only among the uneducated, but among the educated. This myth received scientific backing in 1939 when two doctors published their research findings.
that women are happiest in mid cycle at the time of ovulation, but they become tensed, unstable and depressed in the week before and during menstruation, when hormonal levels decline to their lowest level. As a result of this study, a new syndrome emerged in the literature of pathology: the pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS). Today, it is widely accepted ailment and drug industry and doctors are happy to accept its existence. Some discrimination against women is based on this alleged trouble they go through every month.

Finding explanation for the emotional differences between man and woman in the action of sex hormones seems to be unwarranted. The truth is that children start responding to their gender roles at a time when the overall production of sex hormones is at low ebb and when there is very little difference between sexes in hormonal activity. So this hypothesis is taken with a pinch of salt.

The process of becoming a man or woman begins at conception and never really stops. Both biology and social conditioning play their respective roles in this. But as of now, there is no evidence to establish that men and women must feel emotions differently because they are different biologically.

The conclusion, therefore, is that the difference in the emotional reactions of men and women must mostly be the result of traditional sex role stereotypes. Conforming rigidly to these stereotypes restricts our ability to cope with certain life situations where we cannot do catharsis or express ourselves freely, which goes against our natural coping mechanisms. When occasion demands, we should have the ability to respond with appropriate emotional response, no matter what the stereotypes are. This would ensure better mental health to people and make humankind more happy, innocent and contented.
Social Structure and Gender Orientation

As indicated earlier, the word ‘gender’ is used to denote the social make up of a person. Thus, there are certain socially allocated roles based on sex and related expectations from women and men. Women are expected to perform the role of procreation and rearing children while men are supposed to provide protection and resources for living. Let us look at various stages of human growth vis-à-vis social roles in patriarchal structure.

Childhood: Social prejudices are observed even as soon as a child is born. Baby boy is welcomed with great ecstasy and warmth, while girl’s birth is taken into indifference, if not overt manifestation of grief and sadness. We had discussed about the detection of the sex of the child and killing it in the womb itself if it happens to be a girl. In India, female infanticide is also not uncommon. Nevertheless, there are many families where girls do not face such hard discriminations that snatch the right to live from them.

In patriarchal social structure, more often than not, girl child is made to socialize in a protective environment of home while boys are encouraged to maintain their ties with friends and community and explore the world. When resources are scarce, opportunity of growth and development are given to boys than girls — females are expected to have their meals in the last when all male family members have had their foods and that too whatever little is left over. This practice is attached to religious and socio-cultural norms. It has resulted in malnutrition among females right from the childhood especially in third world countries. Anaemia and other deficiency disorders are the outcome of chronic malnutrition. This is one of the significant reasons for lower physical strength among women than men.
Coming to educational and other developmental opportunities, some kind of apathy is observed towards girl child’s education. There are many reasons of why girls, in general, lag behind boys in educational attainment. One, preference is given to son’s education, as he would support parents in old age, while a girl is expected to care for their in-laws as a dutiful bahu. Two, if a girl is highly educated it would be difficult to find a groom for her. Three, education, has, perhaps, wrongly, been taken as training for an occupation/profession that would provide a source of livelihood. In that case, since males are often considered the bread earner of the family, women’s education is considered futile. Further, many girls are forced to sacrifice their education as they have to look after their younger siblings, which is, of course, the role of a female as delineated by the society. Next, it is also believed that education would take away the most cherished attributes of women — timidity, tenderness, submissiveness, and receptivity making them more assertive, aggressive and demanding.

**Adolescence**: In India, many girls are married off in childhood and in adolescence, they are sent to their husband’s place. Menarche (onset of menstrual cycle) is taken as readiness to procreate. Early and repeated pregnancy often takes heavy toll of their health. Chronic malnutrition like anaemia is widely prevalent. Social scientists often believe that adolescence is a period of great turmoil for the child, which is reflected in his/her behaviour in terms of irritability, rigidity, and non-conformist attitude. However, girls are socialized to be timid and docile while boys are free to show their aggression. Many times, above mentioned peculiarities are not seen in the behaviour of adolescent boys and girls and we may infer that societal norms and expectations win over the biological and psychological dimensions of personality.
**Adulthood**: In adulthood, societal expectations range from beginning of family life, if it has not yet started. For males, emphasis is on career while women are expected to develop skills in home management and child care. Any delay in conception after marriage raises suspicion among elders in the family and neighbourhood regarding infertility of, invariably, women. Societal norms and role expectations dominate so much, especially in traditional patriarchal societies in India, that a person is hardly left with any individuality of his/her own. Men derive their identity from their career or job. They are supposed to be the ‘provider’ of the family, meeting their economic needs. If he tries to engage himself in household activities or child care, it is not considered a ‘manly thing’. Woman’s identity is directly related to her husband’s position in the family and society. Household work is taken as exclusive domain of woman. Even if she is earning, she cannot afford to forgo her traditional role of home management and child care. In most of the dual earner families woman are doubly burdened with their economic as well as household roles. In fact, mainly in the economic activities of primary sector, say, agriculture, where whole family is involved, it is the females who would do most of the work while males enjoy control and ownership. To exemplify, in the hill farming, two bullocks work for 1,064 hours, man for 1,212 hours and a woman for 2,485 hours, in a year, in one-hectare land. So, women work more than the bullocks and men together give (Singh, 1987).

It may be noted that household work or even woman’s contribution to agricultural work is never calculated in economic terms, no credit is given to her for her work. A male who brings money is valued for his contribution. It is the irony that even in families living below poverty line or just above it, women’s economic contribution is significant in ensuring survival and subsistence of the family, still their economic role go unnoticed and unrecognized.
Moreover, if husband is alcoholic, earning wife is made to believe that meeting his ‘needs’ of drug abuse is her duty.

**Old Age:** Feminization of ageing is a worldwide trend. Stated differently, women experience old age more than men, primary reason being higher life-expectancy among females. This proves that women are biologically stronger. However, life long malnutrition, poor health status and indifferent attitude towards personal health and hygiene results in higher rate of morbidity among elderly women than their male counterparts. Added to this, widowhood is more often the fate of women than men especially in old age. In a patriarchal social structure, widowhood for women is a curse and she faces ostracism from social and religious ceremonies. In the case of remarriage, society has biased attitude against women and may result in social exclusion and banishment, while men are free to re-marry. In old age, learned helplessness and dependence put women at the mercy of family members while elderly males face problems due to ego hassles of not remaining the head of the family.

**Implications: Gender Discrimination**

Let us now discuss the implications of gender discrimination and look into the logical evidences against prejudices and biases. It may be noted that behaviour and personality of a person, whether man or woman, is the outcome of nature (hereditary endowment) and nurture (socialization, social roles and expectations). This brings a high degree of heterogeneity as there are numerous factors influencing heredity and social environment. Scientists claim that no two persons in the world are ‘exactly alike’, not even fraternal twins. It is therefore, not uncommon to come across a woman who is assertive and aggressive and a man who is submissive and receptive. In fact, feminine and masculine qualities are present in all of
us, though at a varying rate. It is the social expectations that are translated into our behaviour through the socialization process. A child born in a conformist family learns to imbibe socially appropriate gender roles and another one born in an egalitarian family may have flexible gender role identities.

It is often held that a newborn child is like a clean slate — whatever the socializing agents (parents, family, school, community, etc.) write on it, form the personality and behaviour of the child. Most often than not, collectively and specifically, consciously and unconsciously, these socializing agents inculcate their own biases and prejudices and values and beliefs into the child. They shape the identity and personality of the child. The new-born helpless child is fully dependent on these socializing agents for meeting his/her survival and developmental needs and is too powerless to question the relevance and authenticity of the knowledge imparted to him/her. Whatever information is passed on to the child becomes his/her functional reality, that is, his/her truth that he/she is socialized to believe in. For instance, females are weaker than males, men are more knowledgeable than women, females’ role is to be a caregiver to children and elderly in the household — all this information get crystallized in the brain of the child and then becomes the ‘reality or truth’ for him/her, which he/she often does not question at all and in his/her life practice the same. Such sex-related beliefs and biases cut across the temporal and spatial dimensions and get ingrained in our ‘collective ideology’, which then becomes too difficult to be changed as not only the family but the larger community, the society starts practicing those ideological beliefs and they become a part of relatively permanent social structure such as patriarchy.

The impact of this patriarchal social structure is reflected in demographic variables like skewed sex ratio, high rate
of maternal mortality rate, low enrolment rate and even lower retention rate.

Next, whatever differences are observed in an average man or woman can be traced back to Darwin’s use-disuse theory. According to it, evolution is a continuous process and during that process whatever body organs are used extensively get strengthened and enlarged while those body organs that have lost their functionality get extinguished. For instance, during the process of evolution human beings lost their tail and now appendices (tail bone) has no functional utility left in the body. From ancient times, society assigned to women the role of household work and child care and to men economic role. Now, women’s body has more fat (as a reservoir of energy in case of contingency like pregnancy and lactation period; fat around torso helps in carrying fetus in the womb) and men are more muscular (for during physical labour). This makes an average man stronger (physically) than woman while female is able to survive in least and worst conditions while men cannot.

The fact is that man and woman belong to the same species, it would be a wrong notion that they cannot understand each other. There are differences between them, but it is a bit of exaggeration to say that “Men are from Mars and women are from Venus”. There is a little bit of a man in every woman and a little bit of woman in every man. Some social scientists believe that within every man there is the reflection of a woman, and within every woman, there is the reflection of a man.

In the light of the forgoing discussion, our aim should be to accept the feminine and masculine qualities without rating them higher or lower or judging them as good or bad. In the light of Human Rights, every human being, whether man or woman, has the right to make decisions about his or her own life and should be given equal
opportunity for growth and development. As social work professionals, we should try to ameliorate gender-stereotyped beliefs and practices that hamper the freedom and righteous and fair place of a person (man or woman) in the society. Since, restricted and constrained practices are ingrained in our social fabric, our clients may be individuals, families and communities. Instances of gender stereotypes are observed in everyday life in our educational system (educational materials have gender stereotypes; teachers, mentors are biased; families to send boys to school, etc.), legal system (gender insensitivity is seen in legislations, both in principle and functionalities, in law makers and implementers), workplace system (physical, psychological and sexual abuse and exploitation; denial, delay in equal wages, insensitivity with regard to her matrimonial and motherhood roles), health care system (women have lower availability, accessibility and affordability of health care services, there is attitudinal constraint too among service providers as well as females themselves), socio-cultural ethos (prejudiced practices and expectations), political system (women not encouraged for a long time to take up leadership role or involved in decision-making process). Some of the chief stakeholders may be families, schools, health care settings, judicial and legal framework, political set up from grassroots to top bureaucracy and workplaces. Methods employed may range from casework to social action and social work research. Strategies employed can be advocacy, persuasion, teaching, logical argumentation, facilitation, networking, conflict mitigation, and the like. Approaches adopted would vary from preventive, curative to ameliorative, rehabilitative and promotive.

**Sexual Minorities**

Society gives recognition only to a heterosexual relationship that is between a man and a woman. However, this does
not rule out the chance of presence of other sexual orientations often termed as homosexuals. Being small in number and proportion they are called sexual minority and from social work perspective they form a vulnerable group because of societal stigma and discrimination against them. **Sexual minority** is a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society.

Since your childhood you must have observed *hijras* coming to your neighbourhood especially during marriage and child birth. They are only a subgroup of enuch who are genetically deformed not to be included in any of the sex category of being a male or a female. They have biological characteristics (presence of XXY chromosomes) of both males and females with deformed genitals. They fail to lead a normal life as society over-values ‘normal’ human beings and just denies and ignores existance of ‘third sex’. There is a cultural practice that during child birth hijras come to the household to celebrate by singing and dancing. During this process of dancing and *badhai* ceremony, one of the hijras checks the genitals of the newborn and in case of any defect, they force the family to give away the child to them. *Eunuch* often satisfy their sexual needs by having anal sex with males or with other Eunuch, which make them highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. One subgroup of Eunuch works as sex workers which is the only option of livelihood available to them.

This apart, there are certain other sexual orientations, main among them are delineated here. There are males who feel attracted towards other males and not females for sexual intimacy. Biologically, they do not have any deformity or difference but psychologically and emotionally they feel that they are the females wrongly caught in the body of a male. There are some males who prefer to be bisexual, that is, have sexual relations with males as well as females.
Transgenders, in this context, are those persons who have reverse sexual orientation to their biological body. So, males want to become females and vice versa, through surgical changes in their genitals. Lesbians are females who are sexually attracted towards females. Initially the term ‘homosexuals’ are referred primarily to lesbians (females having sex with females) and gays (males having sex with males). Now it includes bisexual and transgender people. These four categories (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) are often grouped together under the rubric LGBT.

As social work professionals you need to understand the issues related to sexual minorities. In India, homosexual practices are sinful in the eyes of law. Section 377 of Indian Penal Code criminalizes anyone who “voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal”. This, in the light of Human Rights, is unjustified as feeling for same sex is very natural for them and just because heterosexuality gives way to procreation and reproduction and is practiced by majority cannot become mandatory for all humans to abide by it. Social activists maintain that not giving freedom of expression of love between two adult human beings, whether same sex or not, is violation of their human rights. As social work professionals, whatever our personal sexual orientations are, we should understand the needs and challenges of people with sexual minorities and should shed away our biases and prejudices against them.

The scope of social work, in the case of homosexuals is to provide information about sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. They should be informed about the ways of risk reduction vis-à-vis HIV. Further, creating a positive enabling environment would go a long way in providing them their rightful place in the society as well
as reduce the risk of HIV. Homosexuals are often taken as the careers of HIV whereas the fact is that they are the victims. Social workers should work for providing freedom from all forms of exploitation and abuses to homosexuals.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter, concepts of sex and gender, feminine and masculine traits were discussed. There are certain biological differences between man and woman based on their chromosomes (X and Y) and correspondingly genitals and hormones. The basic difference lies in the fact that man impregnates woman and woman possesses the ability to give birth to a new life. Apart from this differential role in reproduction, there are many socially created differences that had led to prejudices and discriminations against females. Patriarchal social structure has ensured, in myriad of ways, superiority of males and inferiority of females. Discrimination against female begins even before her birth and continues till she dies in old age, which is observed in family and community in matters of health and nutrition, education and skill development, recreation and social interaction, decision making and leadership, marriage and family life, etc.

Gender-stereotyped myths and beliefs were discussed. The emotionality of woman, though considered her weakness often helps her in maintaining sound mental health. Difference in terms of physical strength may be due to their role differentiation that over centuries has resulted in physical traits and functioning.

The needs and problems of sexual minorities were also delineated in the light of human rights.
References


Family Life Cycle

*Archana Kaushik

Introduction

Just as human beings pass through various stages of life cycle from childhood to adulthood to old age, in a similar way families also pass through various stages. Family life cycle begins with independence stage to marriage of two people. It has expansion phase as children are born and reared and again gets contracted with children starting their own independent life, settled in career and married off and old couple staying alone. Though this family life cycle has remained more applicable to western and urban societies where nuclear families are the norm of the day and neo-local pattern is commonly observed where married couples begin their life independent of the parent families. This family life cycle model does not fit in adequately in the case of joint family, extended family or even alternate family patterns. Pertaining to Indian socio-cultural context, this family life cycle approach does not have wide applicability. Nevertheless, it gives an important understanding of the needs and resources, tangible and intangible, that individual family members require in meeting the demands of family and society and executing their roles effectively.

Added to this, it may not be necessary that all the families, more so all nuclear families, pass through all these stages of family life cycle in the same sequence. There may be contingent conditions that disrupt the smooth sailing of
these stages of family life cycle, which would be discussed subsequently in the unit. A sincere attempt has been made to adapt the family life cycle approach to Indian context, covering the challenges social work professionals encounter while working with individuals and families in various stages of family life cycle.

A family life cycle may be defined as the emotional and intellectual stages one passes through from childhood to retirement years as a member of a family. The stages of the family life cycle are:

- Independence.
- Coupling or Initiation into family life stage.
- Parenting or Expansion of family stage.
- Retirement and empty nest or Contraction stage of family life cycle.

Before moving further, let us look at the relevance of studying family life cycle and also understand its applicability. There would be certain common reference points in understanding various stages of family. The family life cycle approach is more applicable to the middle class nuclear families. Those families living below poverty line often fail to accomplish many tasks related to growth and development of individual family members. Alternate family patterns like women headed families, dual Income No Kid families also do not pass through all the stages of family life cycle as given below. Joint family patterns also have different functioning and coping abilities on account of its composition, life-style and functioning.

Why learning about various stages of family life cycle is important? As social work professionals you would be able to assess the needs and resources of families at various stages of family life cycle and in the case of families facing
problems in mastering the skills and milestones of each stage, you may provide needed intervention. Another role of social workers would be creating awareness about the challenges and requirements of each stage among families so that there would be least maladjustment among various systems of the family and between family and social environment. Family life cycle theory suggests that successful transitioning may also help to prevent disease and emotional or stress-related disorders. Understanding of the family life cycle would also help in planning and implementing family life enrichment programmes for the well-being of families in particular and society in general.

Let us now look at various stages of family life cycle.

**Independence Stage**

Independence stage is basically the preparation stage to enter the family life cycle. It is one of the most crucial stages as later adjustments and successful completion of roles expected depends on this stage. As individuals enter young adulthood, they begin to separate emotionally from their family. During this stage, the persons strive to seek full independence — emotionally, physically, socially, and financially. They begin to develop unique qualities and characteristics that define their individual identity. By this time major boys and girls tend to have their own identity, preferences, likes and dislikes. They learn to accept responsibility, accomplish major tasks independently and try achieving self reliance in financial matters.

You may recall Erickson’s sixth stage of psycho-social development — Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation that coincides with independence stage of family life cycle. Individuals, at this stage, try to find and maintain mutually satisfying relationships, primarily through marriage and friends. Intimacy is a vital skill to develop during the independent, young adult years. Intimacy is the ability to
develop and maintain close relationships that can endure hard times and other challenges. In an intimate relationship, one learns about commitment, compatibility, attachment and sharing emotions and feelings.

**Resources Available:** Most often people have plenty of time and energy resource. They are financially strong with expenditures being the minimum as compared to other stages of family life cycle.

**Issues of concern:** Many times, young adults develop very romantic, idealistic and impractical mental picture of their life partners. After marriage when they see the gap between their mental image and reality of the marriage partner, they fail to cope with themselves and their spouse. Social work professionals may organize pre-marital counseling sessions and help them to develop a practical and rational viewpoint about marriage. Social workers should aim at developing values of democracy and inter-dependence, learning to understand others’ points of views, communication skills as a part of family enrichment programmes.

Further, with reference to socio-cultural milieu in India, talking about sex and sexuality is taboo. Adolescents and young adults lack adequate and proper knowledge about sex, sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc. Many adolescent and young males visit sex workers or indulge in pre-marital sex, may acquire STD/HIV and pass it on to their innocent spouse after marriage. Thus providing sex education is one of the biggest challenges for social workers.

These apart, there are certain issues that directly or indirectly influence a person’s family life. These may be: economic issues like unemployment, under-employment, dissatisfaction with career; health issues like ailments due
to alcoholism, tobacco consumption and other substance abuses especially among males and anaemia and other malnutrition among females; mental health issues like stress, frustration, anger, etc.

Therefore, salient tasks and responsibilities of this stage and corresponding role of social work professionals may be delineated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks &amp; Responsibilities</th>
<th>Role of Social Worker</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and practice of healthy life style, intake of nutritious food, avoiding malnutrition, avoiding substance abuse.</td>
<td>Imparting education about ill-effects of anaemia and other deficiency diseases especially among females. Preventive and educative role about substance abuse, de-addiction and rehabilitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development: getting suitable job, confidence to run the family independently mainly among males.</td>
<td>Information dissemination, advocacy if individuals come in conflict with work-system in the social environment, mediation, facilitation of skill enhancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of role as spouse and in-law, emotional maturity and realistic — expectation from the life-partner, understanding the need of developing mutually satisfying relationship and intimacy.</td>
<td>Initiating pre-marriage counseling with the aim of developing a democratic attitude among the youth towards the roles of spouse as against the patriarchal ideals.</td>
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This apart, the role of social worker would be to correct any incongruent relationship between various social systems in the environment and the individual family members (here, youths) or any conflicting relationships within the family. Every effort should be made to help the youth, who are going to initiate their family life, prepare
themselves to develop affiliation, love and intimacy, maturity and skills to perform societal roles expected of them as married couples. Those individuals who fail to develop capability to intimacy and love may remain in isolation and alienation, which calls for roles of social workers at the curative level.

**Initiation Stage : Coupling**

After independence stage, the next stage in the family life cycle is coupling. The couples explore their ability to commit to a new family and a new way of life. Being in a committed relationship with someone in the institution of marriage does involve a process of adaptation and relationship building. Marriage often requires unique skills.

After marriage, quite often, a girl either moves to the family of her husband or the couple set up a new household unit. In the former set up, a girl has to make adjustments with many more relationships along with husband. These are in-laws, husband’s kith and kin. Initial period of gestation calls for many adjustments by newly wed couple as well as family members. Especially in the case of old parents, marriage of son leads to a feeling of insecurity and loss of undivided attention and love of son, as they have to ‘share’ their son with the daughter-in-law. These feelings of insecurity and alienation are unconsciously reflected in their faultfinding behaviour in the *bahu*. The new bride too finds it difficult to adjust to the new customs and lifestyles of family members of the new family. This transitioning into the new family system may require alterations into the mental images, ideologies, value systems that the girl is socialized with.

Joint family facilitates values of inter-dependence, sharing and caring for each other. It provides safety and security to its members. It can make up for problems like
unemployment, underemployment, health problems which may result in not being able to perform duties adequately. Added to this, when seen from the gender angle, joint family, by and large, has failed to provide justice to female members in terms of providing opportunities democratically for growth and development. Females have remained in the four walls of the household and are expected to be docile, timid, reinforcing the sita-savitri image of woman. A young bahu may face problems in initial adjustments, understanding the roles she is expected to play and coming to terms with new cultural, social contexts, value systems, way of life, which would be different than what she is used to at her family of orientation. It may here be noted that many characteristics of joint family system are not visible today such as eldest male being the head of the household, pooling of income and its appropriation as per the needs of the individual members, power equations too have loosened.

In neo-local families where the young couple set up their own family unit, though with strong emotional bonding with their parents' family, there are quite different problems and coping mechanisms. It is often held that two individuals enter in the marriage relationship with their own set of personal ideas, expectations, values that are shaped by their experiences and socialization in the family of origin. In a new family system, both individuals go through the process of enculturation, assimilation and adaptation, though at varying degrees to form the new set of values, norms and role expectations.

Couple living in neo-local family set-up experience more freedom and privacy to communicate and share various activities. They have more time resource and energy resource. However, in the case of dual earning families, both the couple have to spend a lot of time at the work place and are left with minimum of the time for shared
activities. If spouses understand the constraints and frustrations of work place and roles related to family functioning is democratically divided with flexibility and attitude of care for each other, then it ensures well-being of both the partners. However, in the case of families, where husband tries to continue patriarchal and autocratic lifestyle expecting from his working wife to strike a perfect balance between work and home management, puts the wife in role strain and stress.

In the coupling stage, husband and wife, compared to other stages of family life cycle, have ample time resource which they can spend in making their relationship strong, establishing democratic family norms, caring and sharing, making goals for family enhancement and career development. Similarly, couple being young, have plenty of energy resource too, which they can utilize in economic as well as creative pursuits. The young couple has comparatively greater money resource as they generally do not have many responsibilities to shoulder upon.

As social work professionals, we need to study whether any of the marriage partners is being oppressed in the name of values, tradition and unfair social structure and if it is happening then we need to rectify certain elements in the family system. We need to look at all the three areas — socialization of family norms, family ecology and family dynamics — for assessing family relations (details given in Unit 1). The role of social worker may be preventive (to avoid family breakdown), curative (handling situations of family crisis and family disorganization) and promotive (enhancing family well-being).

The social worker may have to deal with various domains that are crucial at this stage. They are handling finances (especially in lower-socio-economic household, financial constraints take heavy toll of family well-being), life-style
(husband and wife may prefer to continue their own life style when the need is assimilate and adapt a new one) relationship with in-laws (not being empathetic and having superiority and biases would make the relationship bitter), sexuality or sexual compatibility (also includes sexual health and knowledge about STD and HIV). The relationship skills that couple develops at this stage and coping with conflicts (fight, avoid, compromise) would go a long way in strengthening the husband-wife relationship and also other dyadic relationships (parent-child, in-laws).

The ultimate goal at this stage is to achieve interdependence, which occurs when couple has separated-connected type of cohesion when both of them have their space and individuality at the same time they are sharing goals, dreams, responsibilities together. If both marriage partners are committed, understand each others’ perspective, have positive communication skills, put the needs of another ahead of their own, relationship becomes stronger, healthy and amicable. The social workers should be able to find where the gaps exist in relationship and accordingly should facilitate amending the gaps and enhancing marital well-being. Family counseling, family therapy, case work, advocacy, group counseling, sessions on enhancing family well-being are some of the strategies used extensively by social workers in the field of family and child development.

Expansion Stage : Parenting

Parenting is one of the most challenging phases of the family life cycle. The time span of this stage is generally the longest. In Indian context, commonly, purpose of marriage is to continue progeny. In fact, it is said that without child(ren) a family is never complete. Childlessness is considered a curse. Similarly becoming parent out of wedlock is also a taboo, especially for women. Added to
this, many couples, especially in mega cities, opt for not having kids mainly because of their hectic career oriented life-style.

In majority of families, if wife doesn’t become pregnant within two years of marriage, elderly in the family and neighbourhood start commenting and questioning her fertility. Further, impact of patriarchal social structure is so ingrained that girl child is rarely accepted with the same love and joy as boys. In Indian culture, often couples don’t discuss about their sexuality and even planning the babies. It is primarily the decision of the husbands to use a family planning method or not. There are many complex socio-cultural issues associated with sexuality in India. Talking about sex is considered a taboo. Women are not expected to discuss their problems related to sexual health. Knowledge about family planning methods is very poor. There are myths, misconceptions and religious norms that hamper using family planning methods. National Rural Health Mission is now one of the biggest programmes that aim at bringing about positive changes in the attitudes of people towards family planning.

The decision to have children influences almost all aspects of life of prospective parents. Children are so time-consuming that skills not learned in previous stages will be difficult to pick up at this stage. Couple’s ability to communicate well, maintain their relationships, and solve problems is often tested during this stage. Along with the joy that comes from having a child, new parents may feel a great deal of stress and fear about these changes. A woman might have concerns about being pregnant, going through childbirth and rearing child. In joint family system there are many people to provide support to the mothers to be and young mothers while in nuclear families couple, more often, have to rely on young untrained domestic workers. Working mothers often face strained in striking
balance between work place and child care. Though Maternity Benefit Act 1961 exists, most women remain out of the purview of the Act on account of being working in informal sector.

India, which is nearly seventy percent rural, does not have adequate health care infrastructure. The country has a huge web of Primary Health Centres along with sub centers, secondary and tertiary health care facilities. However, accessibility is a big problem. India still has high rate of infant mortality rate as well as maternal mortality rate even in comparison to most of the developing countries. Families not able to get adequate facilities for maternal and child health often face problems in discharging their responsibilities adequately.

Giving birth to a girl child brings disgrace to women in most of the traditional societies in India. Infanticide is not uncommon. India’s sex ratio is highly skewed against females. One of the reasons for this is detection of sex of the unborn child and abortion if it happens to be a girl. Feticide is illegal but is practiced cutting across educated and uneducated, rural and urban people. It is quite challenging for social work professionals to bring about this deep rooted bias against girl child that snatch away from them their ‘Right to Life’.

After child-birth, roles and responsibilities of both parents increase manifolds. In those cases where fathers shun away from their responsibilities by saying that ‘child care is not a man’s job’, mothers are often overburdened which may affect their physical and mental health adversely. This situation of role conflict and role strain calls for social work intervention.

Young parents suddenly have scarce time resource and money expenditure also increases. Taking care of neonate is also physically quite strenuous. Couples who share
responsibilities, understand each others’ strains and problems pass through this phase with much ease than those who adopt negative coping patterns (blaming each other, avoiding responsibilities, etc.)

**Parenting Young Children**

Socialization of children is a major task of parents in this stage. It includes facilitating the child accomplish developmental tasks successfully such as sitting, crawling, standing at infancy, language development, physical development, mastering motor skills, social skills, developing etiquettes and mannerism among children as they grow older. Schooling of children also requires time and money resource of parents. Immunization and taking care of health needs of children is also very crucial.

There may be red flag situations requiring attention of social work professionals. One set of situations is related to family norms such as superiority of male child and biases against meeting the development needs of girl child, inequitable distribution of scarce family resources in favour of males. Another set of situations is with family ecology. Children belonging to backward castes and classes denied opportunity for adequate education facility, problems related to infrastructure, availability of teachers and teaching materials at school, accessibility of schools (girls being denied opportunity for higher studies as the school is not in the same village), poverty and child labour, disability, economic constraints to pay fees or buy books, etc. There is denial of Right to Education among such out of school children.

This stage poses financial constrictions on parents, as they have to meet the increasing cost of education of children. With higher inflation rates it becomes increasingly difficult for most of the middle class and lower middle class families to meet the basic and developmental needs of children.
Parents have to work harder to earn more, time and energy resources also start shrinking. Earning a decent livelihood for the family becomes a prime concern and hobbies, creative pursuits, spending time with each other take a backseat for most of the couples.

This transition of prime role of being parent from that of a spouse is an important aspect of this stage of family life cycle. Inculcating high values and skills, social and emotional, involving children into decision-making process, are major tasks of parents. When one or both the parents fail to understand their roles properly and accept this transition phase with maturity and sincerity, problems start cropping up in their married life. Caring for young children cuts into the amount of time that an individual might otherwise spend alone or with his/her spouse. If couples do not have skills in communication, cohesion, relationship strengthening, democratic decision making, sharing roles, understanding each others needs and problems, there may be problems like extramarital affairs, marital abuse resulting in separation and divorce. Social workers have preventive role in avoiding marital disorganization and family breakdown. Similarly, promotive role would help in enhancing skills that would lead to marital harmony and family well-being. In case, family is disorganized, social workers need to rehabilitate the children and other family members in such a way that the harm of crisis can be minimized. Divorce and extramarital affairs often occur during the raising of small children when the parents have not learned proper skills to deal with such life situations.

It may be noted that children’s healthy development depends on parents’ ability to provide a safe, loving, and organized environment. Children benefit when their parents have a strong marriage.
Parenting Adolescents

Parenting teenagers can be a rough time for the family. Adolescence is the period when physically, mentally and socially a person goes through numerous changes. There are many hormonal changes that take place in the body to prepare a person towards sexual maturity. In Indian context, when talking about sex and sexuality with one’s own children is a taboo, there is often a gap between parents and offspring where both hesitate to share their feelings and emotions with each other. Most adolescents depend upon their peers for sex education who themselves are hardly knowledgeable. Premarital sex is very common, nowadays, both in rural as well as urban India. Adolescents are susceptible to STD and HIV infections. Added to this, they can be easily lured away towards alcohol and drugs.

At this stage family values, bonding, affection, trust and approachability to parents for any problem are required for the children to pass through this phase successfully. Ground reality shows that a sizable proportion of adolescent girls are married away and may have to bear the burden of pregnancy when their body and mind are not prepared for it. Parents’ sensitivity and knowledge is required to allow girl children to study, become self-reliant and get married at an appropriate age. Social work professionals need to do advocacy against early marriages.

Another area of concern is increasing pressure of examination and stress related to academic performance. The expectations from children are too much and fear of not being able to perform even leads to suicidal attempts among the adolescents. There is a need for urgent social work intervention in this area in collaboration with school authorities, families and community.

It is an important task of parents of adolescent children to strive for a balanced atmosphere in which teenagers have
a sense of support and emotional safety as well as opportunities to try new behaviours. An important skill at this stage is flexibility, as parents should encourage their children to become independent and creative, establishing boundaries for adolescent children while at the same time encouraging exploration. Toward the end of this phase, a parent’s focus shifts from the maturing teen to their career and marriage.

Specific goals during the stage of parenting adolescents include allowing the child to move out of the family system. At this stage time, money and energy resources start reducing. Parents reach closer to old age and money is being saved for higher education and marriage of children.

Social work professionals in the field of family and child development may impart necessary knowledge about harmful effects of substance abuse, HIV, STD infections. Career counseling and guidance are also needed at this stage.

**Contracting Stage : Retirement and Empty Nest**

This is the last stage of family life cycle. Many significant events happen at this stage — children settling down in their career, their marriage and setting up their own housing unit, either within the extended household/family or separately (neo-local), retirement from the economically active life and beginning of newer adjustments and newer roles at the family and community level.

In India, a great degree of heterogeneity can be observed at this stage. Daughters, by and large, go to their husband’s family after marriage and are not supposed to have any claim over the matters of their family of orientation, except the emotional ties (though legally they can be the equal
claimant in the property of her father, as her siblings). Dowry harassment and conflicts in married life of daughters may wreck the old parents emotionally. Sons also begin their career and married life. It takes a heavy toll financially on families with limited resources to meet the expenses of career and marriage of children.

In most patriarchal societies like India, adult males derive major part of their identity as an economic being. There is compulsory retirement around old age. Therefore retirement comes as a big blow to many of the old males and it takes a lot of time for them to come to terms that their economically active life is over. However, nearly 90 per cent of the people work in informal sector where deteriorating physical strength and stamina becomes hurdle in carrying out hard physical labour and the old person has to leave the job giving way to hale and hearty energetic youth. They find themselves as spent-force with enough of time resource but scarce money and energy resources.

For majority of females, who have spent their prime of time in being the housewife, involving themselves in tedious thankless, unpaid, un-recognized household work, old age comes with many health problems and emotional crisis. In contemporary times, elderly females have lost most of their significant roles they used to perform at home. In ancient and medieval times, they would guide and supervise young daughters-in-law in household management, inculcate values and discipline among grandchildren through story telling, inform about home remedies, in case of any ailments among family members. Now-a-days, with nuclear families on the rise, all these roles are waning away. Values of independence, privacy has also strained the inter-generational relationship. With television, computers and other modern gadgets, interaction time of grandchildren and grandparents is also
decreasing quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, in families, where three generations are living together, the elderly parents who have given their heart and soul to the family tend to be ignored and neglected and in turn become vulnerable.

In situations, where young children step out of the household to establish their own household unit or for their career development, old parents are left alone in the family. They started their family unit together and in this stage again the two are left alone. This is called ‘empty nest’. They may have enough **time resource**, but **energy resource** and **money resource** decrease considerably. A lot of health problems like high/low blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, cataract, etc., creep in which influences their daily life activities. Socially also, elderly parents do not have significant roles to perform and feel disengaged. This results in feelings of alienation, worthlessness and neglect. It is termed as ‘empty nest syndrome’ that denotes the anxieties, loneliness and feeling of emptiness, the old couple are left with, when their children leave.

In Indian context, in general, elderly parents are not left alone and they stay with families. Old age homes are coming up but are not popular. Even if conflicts are there, elderly want to stay in their family only. Further, separation from spouse, due to death, is a major crisis event. Widowhood, especially among elderly women increases their vulnerability manifolds. With socio-cultural biases and discriminations, widowhood often brings economic and social insecurity along with emotional setback.

Roles of social work professionals in this stage include pre-retirement counseling, preparing late middle-aged for old age, preventive interventions to avoid health problems, advice on financial management, dealing with death of spouse, relatives and friends, inter-generational relation building, active ageing, maintaining physical and financial autonomy in old age.
It may be noted that family life cycle may fail to accomplish its stages successfully in situations like family disorganization due to separation, death, divorce, natural calamities or man made disasters. There may be adjustment problems between the couple, childlessness, undue interference of relatives and friends. Sometimes, outside family systems like political, economic, ethnic, legal, etc., may threat family harmony. In such cases, social work intervention is required to deal with crisis and help family regain its functions and duties.

**Conclusion**

Family life cycle is a process, divided into various identifiable stages, through which an individual passes as a member of a family and each stage calls for acquisition of certain skills and expertise giving confidence and satisfaction if one is successful and despair and self-doubt, if unable to do so. The first stage is **Independence**, which is preparation to enter the family life. Individuals have to acquire skills in developing intimacy, mutually satisfying relationship, emotional maturity along with suitable career development. Individuals have to strike a balance between their personal goals and societal roles expected out of them as marriage partner. Roles of social worker as facilitator, educator, pre-marriage counselor, mediator, etc., are also discussed. In the second, **Coupling stage** individuals are expected to perform their roles as husband and wife, as in-laws effectively so as to enhance amicable and cordial relations. Impact of confirming to societal norms in the context of patriarchal social structure and family dynamics with arrival of new *bahu* are conferred. Preventive, promotive and curative roles of social worker are looked into.

In the expansion or **parenting stage** of family life cycle, couples take up new roles as parents. Gender bias, role strain for working mothers in nuclear families, role of
health care and work pace systems in the social environment of the family were delineated. Socialization of the children, inculcating values and social, emotional skills among them are the major tasks of couples as parents. Parenting of young children is quite different experience than parenting adolescents. There is a strain on family’s economic and time resources as children start growing up. Helping the children deal with pressures of academics, finding suitable career options, facilitating their proper social, emotional and sexual development are crucial tasks of parents. The last stage of family life cycle is the contraction stage, when the children settle down in their respective careers and married off. They leave the house and old couples are left alone. Coming to terms of retirement is an important developmental task, especially for males who have most often identified themselves as economic being. Elderly women have to adjust to the fact that they no longer have to perform important roles as parent and home maker that have given her pivotal status in the family.

In this Chapter, discussion was held regarding the suitability of family life cycle model in the Indian context. At the same time, efforts are made to identify scope of social work intervention at each stage.

References


Introduction

Forces of social change like industrialization, urbanization, modernization, liberalization, and changes in political systems have influenced the values, beliefs and practices at a large scale and the family and marriage have not remained untouched. There has been considerable change in the family composition, family structure and family dynamics, which have great degree of influence on the individual development and the unity and stability of family. In the agrarian society, there used to be predominantly joint family system where the eldest male would be the head of the household. With industrialization and urbanization, people started migrating to urban centres and joint family gave way to nuclear family system. There was a change in the composition of the family and accordingly roles, power and status of the family members changed to a large extent. The age and sex were the two principal factors for distribution of status, roles, power and resources. The elders enjoyed superior position based on chronological age and males had higher status than females in ancient and medieval times. In modern era, even younger earning males are enjoying headship and females, in greater number and proportion, are stepping out of the four walls of household for becoming economically self reliant.

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Joint family and nuclear family patterns are considered as normative family patterns. In this chapter we would study some of the alternate family patterns like single parent families, women headed families, childless families, adoptive families, dual earner families and live-in relationships. We also come across certain families where composition looks like that of joint family but when we look at the family dynamics, there is a lot of difference between the theoretical model and the realistic family structure and functioning.

Change in composition, structure, pattern, dynamics and functioning of the family has important repercussion on the society. In ancient times, orphans, children, disabled, elderly were well taken care of by the joint family. Only in rare cases, state had to intervene to provide care and support to the needy. In contemporary times, state has to adopt more proactive multiple role as the preventive role of joint family system is diminishing.

**Impact of Social Change on Institution of Family**

Let us first assume joint family system as the traditional and prominent one, which would be taken as the reference point to discuss the characteristics of nuclear and alternate family patterns. Here certain salient characteristics of joint family may be delineated. In joint family, three generations live together under one roof and eat meals cooked in a single hearth. Senior most male assumes the headship, pools the income earned by family members and appropriates according to the needs of the individual family members. Age and sex rather than personal capabilities are the function of power and status in the family. Thus even if the youngest brother is earning high and elder brother is unemployed, the status and authority of elder brothers would be more than the younger ones.
In contemporary times, even if we observe three generations living together, other characteristics like pooling of income, highest authority of elderly may not be seen. Coming to another form of family that has received wide acceptance from the society is nuclear family. It is a modern democratic family that has the following characteristics:

1) freedom of a choice of mate on the basis of romance, companionship, compatibility and common interests as compared to mate selection by parents on the basis of caste, class and horoscope in joint family system.

2) Independence of young people from their parents after marriage (though in many cases, young couples have strong emotional bonds with their family of orientation and they are involved in day-to-day minor-major decisions and on the contrary there may be neo-local families having no contacts or strained relationships with the family of orientation).

3) The assumption of equality of husband and wife exists in nuclear families in juxtaposition with patriarchal joint family system where females are considered as lower sex and are discriminated upon in almost all walks of life. There also exist many nuclear families where gender stereotypes are strongly practiced.

4) In modern democratic nuclear families decisions are made by husband and wife, with greater participation of children with advancing age, however, many exceptions may be seen in this context.

5) It is more or less assumed that modern nuclear families have maximum freedom for its members as compared to joint family system.

Before looking into the socio-demographic variables that have changed the patterns, functioning and dynamics of family, let us simplify the types of families into two —
traditional and modern — **traditional** being the joint and extended family system with conformist and orthodox value and belief systems and **modern** includes nuclear families and alternate family patterns like single parent families, childless families, women headed families, etc. Let us now look at some of the factors that influence the emergence of various types of family patterns.

**Rural/urban/tribal background:** Locale is an important factor that influences the composition of family and its dynamics. With industrialization, urban centers are increasing rapidly. There has been migration predominantly from rural to urban areas. Young male members often migrate to urban areas in search of economic work leaving behind wife, children and elderly parents. This has given way to women-headed families. A look into the family dynamics shows that there is a change in the status of elderly, women and men. After green revolution, the know-how of the elderly related to agriculture work like time to sow seeds, pest control, etc., has become somewhat redundant. This, along with other factors, has reduced their status and position in the family. With men migrating in search of work, women head the household. Many times migrants take their wife and children too, along with them to urban centers leaving behind elderly parents to fend for themselves.

Tribal families are also changing rapidly with changing socio-demographic factors. Tribals, in general, are no more left with exclusive culture and traditional life-style. After Independence, most of them have received the benefits and status of ‘scheduled tribe’ and are fast assimilating in the ‘mainstream development’. Their traditions and rules related to marriage are also changing, with many exceptions to endogamy and types of marriage that have remained their exclusive cultural domain.
Urban centers are characterized by limited living space, fast pace of life, scarce time for social interaction. Womenfolk also have stepped out of the household to earn a livelihood, which has influenced their traditional role as primary caregiver in the family. Though we come across a sizable proportion of joint families in urban centers but there is a huge change in their family dynamics, roles and functions. Men are expected to share the load of childcare and household work. In families where husbands fail to recognize the need of sharing roles and responsibility, it results in role conflict and role strain. Women are stressed out in striking a balance between the home front and work place. It is adversely affecting their physical and mental health. Elderly have lost their unconditional authority in the family. Their role in socialization of grandchildren through active interaction and story-telling is replaced by TV channels. Doctors have replaced their midwifery role. In home management too young daughters-in-law do not require the advice of their elderly relatives.

**Emergence of newer socio-economic classes:** Based on different modes of earning livelihood, diverse forms of socio-economic classes emerged which have greatly influenced the family patterns and dynamics. With rapid growth of tertiary or service sector, people migrated in huge numbers to urban areas, leaving the agricultural sector. Joint family system, which was reinforced by agrarian culture in numerous ways, gave way to nuclear family systems. People in service class preferred nuclear families to suit their life-style emerging out of mode of work. Entrepreneurial classes have different kinds of family dynamics when the family members, kin are involved in single economic unit. Families where male earning members have to travel or migrate to far off places, women take up the family headship. This led to significant number of single parent families and women headed families.
Social Change: Forces of social change like urbanization, industrialization, job mobility, modernization of values like consumerism, technological development, change in women’s employment status have influenced the dynamics and composition of basic unit of society – the family. Change at political scenario (democracy) and modern education system that further reinforced egalitarian social system also influenced the autocratic practices at the family level. This has deeply touched conservative and hierarchical family ideologies and slowly these traditional family values are giving way to liberal and egalitarian family values.

Thus, we observe that change in the social environment, especially in education system (impact of modern education), political system (democracy from colonialism), legal system (giving equal rights to women, curbing caste and gender related discrimination) work system (emergence of secondary and tertiary sectors), ethnic group system (loosening of religion and caste barriers in social interactions), etc., have influenced the family composition and dynamics. Let us now look at various normative and alternate family patterns that are observed in contemporary times in the next session.

Emerging Forms, Changing Functions and Dynamics of Family

Emerging Forms: Various factors mentioned above have given rise to different patterns of family. Some of the prominent ones are mentioned below:

Joint family: This is the traditional normative family pattern, which has adapted itself in terms of family practices, functions, structure and relationships. In joint family system, role allocations have remained on the basis of age and gender. Though with time, this practice has
diluted and the eldest male does not have total control over family income and property.

**Nuclear family:** They are also called modern democratic family system. Nuclear families are increasingly having family ideology with egalitarian and companionship bases in contrast with hierarchical and traditional autocratic ideology of joint family system. It may be noted that no sound theories can be made regarding the linkage between type of family and associated family ideologies and practices. There may be joint families with egalitarian values and many nuclear families with autocratic and conservative family ideology reinforcing patriarchal social norms.

**Alternate family patterns:** In the contemporary social world, we observe many family forms other than the normative ones, which are collectively known as alternate family forms. There are three trends that are noticeable in alternate family patterns in India:

- Some family forms that were always present have become more visible now such as single parent families established due to widowhood.
- The incidence of some family forms has increased in contemporary world, for example, female headed families established due to male migration.
- Some new family forms have emerged in recent times, for example, the dual earner/career families and in extremely small numbers, the voluntarily childless families.

Some of the common family forms are as follows:

**Conjugal families:** These are neo-local family patterns that may or may not have strong emotional and functional ties with their parent families (family of orientation). There can
be many reasons for such conjugal families, salient ones may be cited as follows:

- More and more youth are now opting for marriage by their own choice, which may not be approved by their parents.
- Mode of earning a livelihood can be another significant reason. Youth migrate for better career options and take their spouse along.
- Values of privacy and independence are taking over the traditional values of inter-dependence and young couples prefer to stay away from joint families.

**Single parent families:** The reasons could be divorce, separation or death of spouse. Often mothers are observed to be taking care of the child when fathers are no more with them. However, nowadays, fathers are winning the custody of the child too and taking up the role of rearing up the kids, which was traditionally the exclusive domain of mothers. Many researches bring out that children of single parent family are deficit in social functioning and intimate relationships and often report to have some behavioural disorders like showing excessive tamper tantrums, being stubborn, rude, anxiety prone, juvenile delinquency, schizophrenia, aggression, hysteria, etc. Similarly, consequences for women of single parent family are lack of normal healthy sexual relationship, social stigma, psychological problems like hysteria, feeling of unworthiness, aggression, restlessness, work overload, no time for self etc. Added to this, there is general decline in financial position of single parent family. However, it is a debatable issue among social researchers that — which has worse impact on psyche of children — families where spouses are invariably in conflicting situations or staying with one parent only after separation or divorce.

**Women headed families:** These are most commonly single
parent families. However, it also includes the families of migrants where male members move to urban centers and wife takes the whole responsibility of the household. It may be noted that in family studies, it is often difficult to categorize families into various mutually exclusive groups. Composition, pattern, dynamics, practices in various family types within the women headed families, are quite heterogeneous. One similarity in all types of women headed families is that there is substantial increase in roles and responsibilities of women heads.

**Childless families:** These families are different than the conjugal families, though composition is same — husband and wife. In childless families, couples do not have children either by choice or due to infertility, even after the couples cross the appropriate age to bear children as per societal norm. Such families often face social stigma, as families without children are considered incomplete.

**Adoptive families:** Families who have adopted a child come in this category. There are many issues involved in adoption of a child in India. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, deals with child adoption. Often family visits are carried out to see the compatibility of child to be adopted in the adoptive family. Girl child has remained out of preference for quite a long period. Added to this, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children, in the name of adoption was not uncommon. This has affected the process of adoption severely. Utmost care is taken before adoption of a child. Further, in general, only very small children are adopted. Religion, caste, creed and class play crucial role in adoption. After adoption, adjustments within the family are needed as adoptive parents have a variety of new roles to be performed.

**Dual Earner No Kid families:** These are childless families exclusively by choice. The couple gets married and there is clear assumption that both of them would give preference
to their career. Often the spouses have hectic working hours and they want to put their energies into their career development only. Such families often are looked down upon as they ‘fail’ to perform their expected societal duty of procreation and contributing to continuation of society.

**Reconstituted/step families:** These families are often the outcome of ‘remarriage’. After death of either spouse or separation/divorce, if a parent re-marries, then children have to learn to adjust with step-parent. Such children often go through a lot of emotional crisis, especially when they are grown up and have strong emotional attachment with the separated parent. This may involve change in their household, schooling, peers, extended family relations, lifestyle and even relation with own parents. Such families are not readily accepted by the society.

**Consensual families:** As mentioned in Unit 1, the United Nations Definition of ‘Family’ includes consensual unions too. Consensual families are composed of couples living together with consent; generally without legal or social sanction of marriage. They are bound by emotional and sexual relations but not married legally or socially. Consensual families do exist in India but they are yet to be accepted by the society.

**Same sex families:** All the above-mentioned family types are generally governed by heterosexual relationships. However, people with sexual minorities and inclination towards same sex are also coming up to seek legal status of their homosexual relations. In Denmark same sex marriages are now legalized. In many Western countries, spouses of same sex are claiming inheritance and insurance rights just as heterosexual couples have. These families face social ostracism especially in traditional societies.
This apart, we have other types of families, which have slightly different composition, dynamics, norms, patterns, other than the normative family patterns. These may be age difference between spouses beyond the prescribed norms (wife much older than husband or vice versa), grandparents living with grandchildren (parents not being able to discharge their parental role for various reasons), migrant families (in relay migration pattern, one family member migrates first and settles at the place of destination, then brings other relatives), families of seasonal, short term migrants. All such families have different issues and challenges that pose hurdles in family harmony and well-being.

**Changing functions and dynamics of family**

A look into the changing functions of the family may be beneficial. Joint family depends upon a very stable occupation and is almost always found in communities based upon an agricultural or pastoral mode of life and in some cases traditional occupation. This kind of family has performed many roles from providing security and safety to its members as being an economic unit. It has many religious functions. Imparting education by elders to youngers was another important function of the family. In this light, we observe that modern family units have changed significantly in terms of its functions too.

**Economic:** With emergence of secondary and tertiary sectors, there has been a major change in the economic role of the family. Now, most of the adults of the household are not engaged into the same economic activity — workplaces have become separate from the family.

**Health care:** Hospitals, health centers, clinics have taken away the midwifery role of elders in the family. Elderly lady’s home remedies are not popular today. People approach to various public and private health care setting
for medical treatment of their ailments. Medical attention during child-birth and infant care are provided by a web of health centers.

**Education:** Imparting education is now the function of kindergarten and schools with development of formal education system. Meaning of ‘education’ has also changed and is more often synonymous to ‘schooling’. Informal education provided by the family cannot have the substitutive role in place of formal schooling.

**Religious functions:** Earlier all religious obligations and functions used to be performed by the elders within the family. In the current scenario, formal places of worship (churches, mosques, temples, etc.) have taken over this salient function of the family too.

**Recreation:** In earlier times, family used to be a source of recreation, relaxation and enjoyment. Family members would sit and chat with each other, play and relax together. At present, clubs, peers and other formal and informal institutions offer recreation and relaxation. In the family set-up too, television, video, computer, Internet, and the like are preferred over talking, sharing feelings, playing with family members.

**Counseling, Welfare and support:** At the time of conflict and crisis elders in the family would provide counseling and now we seek services of family counselors and psychologists. During crisis like separation, desertion, death, widowhood, accident, disability, old age, being orphaned, etc. family used to provide protective shield. In the absence of family, caste and kith-kin group would own the responsibility to take care of the destitute. At present, State or government has taken the proactive role and through its many statutory and non-statutory services, and with help of voluntary organizations it provides rehabilitative, ameliorative, protective and promotive services.
There are certain essential functions like provision of home, production and rearing of children and stable satisfaction of sex needs are considered to be retained by families of modern times. However, evidences show that there are families where these so called essential functions have been given away — presence of dual income, no kid families, families with couples with sexless relationship.

In the light of the above discussions, we may infer that one of the most striking attributes of the contemporary world is the existence of a range of family variations — from the most traditional extended families with strict sex roles to modern dual earner families based on liberal, egalitarian sex roles and to adults cohabiting without marriage. The multiple patterns of family have given rise to two extreme view-points among the social scientists and social researchers — at one extreme are those who think that though family is very important but this institution is dying in the current turbulent social structure. At the other extreme are those who consider the family to be an obsolete and outdated institution that has failed to fulfill the demands of modern day industrial society. Between these two extreme viewpoints, many sociologists maintain that family is neither dying nor becoming outdated, rather it is adapting itself to a multitude of pressures thereby retaining some traditional functions and modifying others and discarding the remaining. Thus, the variations in family structures are indicative of the family’s capability to adapt itself to the needs of changing times.

Let us now talk about the changing family structure and dynamics in the present socio-cultural milieu. Following changes are noticeably important:

- Earlier, role allocations were strictly based on age and gender. Now-a-days, role allocations are more flexible. However, women, most often than not, are doubly burdened as they have to strike balance between their
traditional roles and modern ones. This takes a heavy toll of their physical and mental health.

- Power distribution between various dyadic relationships. **Father and son**: old father no longer enjoys unconditional ascribed status and the earning son takes up family headship. Participation of elderly in family decision-making is dependent on former’s relationship with their children with the power to keep them alienated and isolated more often lies with the children. **Husband wife**: this relationship is more often based on democratic and companionship values rather than power equations benefiting husband, though there exists many exceptions and variations. **In-laws**: those days are gone when mother-in-law would train timid, docile and submissive daughters-in-law into the household work. Girls are married off at relatively later age when their personalities are crystallized and they have their own ideologies and thinking patterns. With empowerment perspective, there needs to be more of democratic functioning style in the family. **Parent-child relationship**: autocratic and authoritarian parenting style is giving way to permissive and democratic ones. Number of siblings are lesser and children from a very early age start participating in decision-making concerning their life and valuing privacy and individuality.

- There has been change in the value pattern of the individuals, which the modern society has offered to us. **Individual growth and achievement** are preferred over familistic values. This has resulted in migration and neo-local family set-ups. **Autonomy** and **Independence** win over conformity and dependence that have remained cherished values in joint family system. People become more and more **self-oriented** and group orientation is favoured at a lesser rate.
As social work trainees, you are cautioned not to perceive these changes as ‘deteriorative’ and ‘unpleasant’. Judging persons opting for individual growth, independence and privacy as selfish and ego-centric would not be appropriate. When seen from democratic and rights’ perspective, same ‘unsought for’ values may appear ‘just’ and appropriate.

Emerging Forms and Changing Functions of Marriage

Marriage as an institution has not remained unaffected with changes in the socio-cultural scenario of the country. There have been changes in the marriage patterns, selection of marriage partner, age at marriage, age at consummation of marriage, marriage rituals, financial exchanges and divorce. Laws related to marriage encourage monogamy thereby legally banning polygamous marriages.

Selection of marriage partner observes norms of exogamy and endogamy. Exogamy is choosing marriage partner from outside some specific group while endogamy norms require that a mate be chosen from within a specified group. Now-a-days, the norms of endogamy and exogamy are not maintained strictly as they were observed in ancient times. Added to this, love, intimacy, companionship and compatibility are more often the criteria than parental choice, horoscope matching, similarity of caste, class, religion and the like.

Youngsters themselves are playing pivotal role in selection of marriage partner. This has changed the inter and intra family dynamics. Children are blamed if anything goes wrong with the marriage. More intolerance is observed between in-law relationships, which, in turn, affect the relationship between spouses.

Whether to have children and if yes, when — is a matter that is increasingly decided mutually by the couple unlike
the earlier times when such freedom of choices were not available to spouses.

Marital disharmony often results in family disorganization. More often than not, women are held responsible for this. Their voice against exploitation, oppression and abuse are often taken as ‘egocentrism’ and in a satirical and sarcastic tone their ‘empowerment’. There may be exceptions when women too have misused their legal rights and to cover up their wrongs.

Extra-marital relations are not uncommon. Workplace and type of job have given enough freedom to spouses and it is very easy for anybody to venture into this and deceive their marriage partner. For social work practitioners, this aspect brings immense challenges.

Financial exchanges at the time of marriage may take place in the form of bride price or dowry. Bride price is the property given by the groom or his family to the bride’s family and dowry is property given by the bride’s family to the groom and his family. Despite anti-dowry laws, financial exchange is a common practice and newspapers are full of cases of bride-burning and suicides.

There are two extreme standpoints of marital relationship between husband and wife. On one hand, in traditional families where there is practically complete subordination of wife to the authority of husband. Patriarchal norms specifying duties and obligations of husband and wife are rigidly followed. On the other hand, modern families focus on companionship that develops out of mutual affection and intimate association between husband and wife. In modern families, husband and wife enjoy a high degree of self expression and at the same time are united by the bonds of affection, congeniality and common interest. Democratic values and processes are observed in modern
families. In patriarchal families, authoritarian and autocratic values and processes are seen where confirming to the traditional norms are most important for family members including wife. In between these two extreme standpoints, there are most families where differential degrees of egalitarian verses traditional norms are practiced between husband and wife.

Another important aspect in the marital relationship is role performance, role clarity and role strain. It is observed that in traditional families, wife’s roles are clearly delineated and they are expected to remain in the four walls of household, take care of children and perform household chores. Husbands are expected to perform economic role of provider and that of protector. Strict sex role stereotypes are observed in traditional families. In modern democratic families, wife also performs economic role and husband does not mind in trying hands in child and elderly care giving that are traditionally women’s roles. However, there are many families where wives struggle hard to strike balance between their traditional role expectations and modern roles. It puts a lot of pressure on women in maintaining their multiple roles such as childcare, home management, employee, wife, in-law, etc.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter, joint family system is taken as a traditional family pattern and all other family patterns are analyzed in the context of joint family. Modern families focus on companionship, love and mutual care. Sex roles are not rigidly defined. In marital relationship too, youngsters prefer compatibility and love as basis of marriage rather than observing traditional norms of endogamy, exogamy, horoscope, caste, class matching, etc.

With social change due to industrialization, urbanization, modernization family composition, patterns and dynamics
are changing. Some alternate family or household compositions are: Childless families (due to infertility or out of choice), Single parent families or households (due to unwed parenthood, death of spouse, desertion, separation or divorce or migration of a spouse), Reconstituted/step families and Consensual unions.

Traditional roles of the family are also changing. Role of imparting education is taken up by schools and colleges. Health care is catered to by private and government hospitals, clinics, health centers and the like. Welfare services are provided by government, which, were under the domain of joint family system. For recreation, clubs, recreational centers, television, computer, internet, etc., have replaced talking and sharing feelings with family members.

Social scientists have divided opinion about the utility of ‘family’ as an institution. Some feel that it is outdated institution that is dying while others consider that it is changing its form and dynamics to meet the demands of changing society.

Marital relationship also has changed from observing conservative, rigid, authoritarian and traditional norms where wife is subordinate to unconditional authority of husband to modern democratic, companionship based, egalitarian perspective. In between these two viewpoints, most wives make a great effort to fulfill their multiple roles that are a mix of traditional and modern roles.

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Introduction

In previous chapter, we understood the concept and relevance of two most important social institutions of society — marriage and family. However, as we are aware that marital and familial relationships do not always go smoothly and harmoniously. There may be factors that lead to family disorganization and marital discord. In this unit we would pay attention to some of those situations that result in incongruent relations in the family or marital relationships, learn to develop a scientific temperament towards these situations and develop skills in resolving the conflicts.

The present society is characterized, among other things, by the declining importance of all primary groups including the family. The traditional image of home and family as a cozy nest of love, security, and never ending happiness is somewhat shattered in the present times. Many empirical evidences show that family discord and divorce is continuously on rise. Undergoing the process of divorce or separation is psychologically and economically often distressing for the partners. The after-effects of divorce, especially for the children have damaging effects particularly when the issue of custody arises. Studies have proven that the emotional experience for the children in disorganized families leads them towards deviant behaviours, even crime.

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Social work profession has a major role to play in assessing the level and causes of family disorganization or marital discord and design intervention accordingly. Family assessment is generally done through holistic approach. Interaction, communication, perception of events and relationships are the main variables that are studied in assessment. Interventions are done at various levels — there is preventive and promotive intervention through family enrichment programmes where appropriate knowledge and skills are imparted among the family members so that various stages of family life cycle are passed through smoothly. Family stress management, family therapy and family crisis interventions are at the ameliorative, curative and rehabilitative levels.

**Family Disorganization and Social Work Intervention**

Family groups are quite diverse and heterogeneous, so are the problems in family relations. As a result, it becomes quite difficult to categorize reasons for family disorganization. Nevertheless, a humble attempt is made here to cite some crucial factors leading to marital discord and family disorganization. There may be **temperamental incompatibility.** Spouses may have differences of opinion on most issues and both of them may fail to resolve conflicts amicably. **Differences in cultural background and/or socio-economic status** of spouses’ families of orientation may also become reasons for friction and conflict. There may be **differences in perception of self and other’s roles** vis-à-vis family and society. Either one or both spouses failing to accept the changing roles and duties of each other due to the needs of changing time may create tensions in the marital life. **Dowry demands** and **conflicts with in-laws** are also common causes of disharmony in the family.
Parent-child conflicts also lead to family disorganization. It may be an extension of spousal conflict or exclusive in nature. Parents may have autocratic, authoritative or permissive socialization patterns. Authoritative parenting suppresses the personality of child and in turn he/she may become rebellion. Permissive parenting may be perceived as indifference and timidity on part of parents and children become stubborn, hostile and arrogant. Family values and parent-child communication are important variables especially when children come in conflict with societal norms and expectations.

Family crisis: Marital relationships may break because of internal or external or both reasons. Divorce, death and bereavement often bring crisis to family. Family crisis results when old coping skills of the family have failed and members feel helpless and clueless to deal with the situation, unless an external help is provided. Reasons of family crisis range from financial to social stigma, discrimination, security threats, separation, death, divorce, etc. In situations like political turmoil such as war, natural calamities like earthquakes, cyclones, man made disasters, say, terrorism, accidents, families face crisis when they are no longer able to perform their roles and functions smoothly.

Before looking into social work intervention strategies let us talk about the perspective that guide the assessment of problem areas in the family. With empowerment perspective, rights of the individual vis-à-vis family may be delineated.

The United Nations has declared 1994 as the International Year of the Family, keeping in view the importance of the family as a basic unit of the society and the need to protect and strengthen it, through state policy and community action, so as to enhance its functioning. It has laid down
the rights of individuals with regard to family, as mentioned below, grouped into three broad aspects:

1) Every individual has a right to have a family and the care of individuals is primarily the family’s responsibility, with effective support from the state.

2) Every individual in the family has the right to equality and non-discrimination, by age and gender, in the allocation of family roles, responsibilities and resources; freedom and choices in family life; care and support from family members in crisis situations; and protection from family abuse and violence. It is the responsibility of every individual, family, community and the state to promote and protect these rights, and enrich family interactions and relationships.

3) Every family in a community and nation has a right to equality and non-discrimination, irrespective of ethnicity or other factors; freedom and liberty; justice with respect to information about and access to public services; social security from the state in crisis situations and protection from abuse and violence. It is the responsibility of every community and every state to promote and protect these rights of the family and provide an eco-balance to the family. It is the responsibility of every family and of all its members, to promote the functioning of the community and the state.

Thus, every individual is entitled to have a family unless he/she leaves it by choice. It also talks about rights of individual members within the family and right of families with respect to larger social environment. As social work professionals, you need to develop the rights based perspective to assess the family situation and develop intervention.
Family Intervention

After understanding the crucial reasons as well as perspective to assessment, let us comprehend some of the major approaches of family intervention. As a family practitioner, your role may be to prevent family disorganization and promote harmony, ameliorate family from stressing events or rehabilitate members after a crisis event. Family counseling, marital counseling, family and marital therapy, crisis intervention, encouraging self-help groups, and legal aid are specific methods that may be used, depending upon the problems encountered and interventions planned. Besides planning and implementing the services, the practitioner needs to monitor and evaluate them and raise public awareness about these services.

The groups needing family intervention may be children, adolescent/youth, women, couples, or the aged; but the family as a whole may be considered the unit for intervention.

Family interventions may be planned through primary or secondary settings for social work. The primary setting may be family planning agencies, agencies for children, women, aged and the disabled, family service centers, community projects and family courts. The secondary settings for family interventions may be schools and colleges, gynaecology and pediatric departments in hospitals, health centers, industries, police stations and civil courts.

Major areas for family intervention

Below is the list of some of the major family situations requiring intervention. As we have discussed earlier that there can be many factors that contribute to family disorganization and may be identified by studying family ecology, socialization of authoritarian family norms,
dysfunctional family interaction patterns or problems with individual members’ developmental tasks. These areas are, therefore, not mutually exclusive:

1) Families with individuals having problems: families of the disabled, families of the chronically/terminally ill, families of substance abuse addicts.

2) Marital problems: Marital disharmony or Marital breakdown

3) Problems with child bearing: infertility or unwed motherhood

4) Abuse and violence in families: Child abuse in family, family violence against women, elderly abuse in family, family abuse of the disabled

5) Families in conflict with other systems: Families with unemployment/indebtedness, families with inadequate or no land/housing

6) Families affected by disequilibrium in other systems: families facing political violence, families facing environmental disasters, uprooted/refugee/migrant families

7) Family deprivation: destitute children, destitute adults, destitute aged.

These family situations may affect the family functions, interactions and individual members. Harm may be caused to physical and mental development and health of individual members, particularly children, women and the aged. In the extreme situation, family may disintegrate and individual members may become destitute.

**Conceptual Framework for Assessment and Intervention**

In this section, we would pay attention to some of the widely used conceptual frameworks or theoretical basis for
assessment and intervention of problematic familial issues. Family practitioners often make use of ‘General Systems Theory’ and ‘Psycho-dynamic approach’.

**General system’s theory**

A system is defined as a set of objects together with the relationships between the objects and their attributes. The objects are the component parts of the system, the attributes are the properties of the objects and the relationships tie the system together. Family may be compared with a system within its social environment. In general systems theory, there exists the system, the system’s environment (supra-system) and the system’s components (sub-systems). In the case of family, dyadic relationships between family members are sub-systems and social environment with education system, work system, political system, ethnic community, etc., form its supra-system. It may be noted that conceptual framework of general system’s theory and ecological theory (as given in Unit 1) is the same. The System’s theory is concerned with the description and exploration of the relationship between interrelated systems. A system is not a random collection of components, but an interdependent organization in which the behaviour and expression of each component influences and is influenced by all the others. What is the applicability of this approach in studying the family problems? System’s theory is a holistic approach that focuses on the interrelationship between various sub-systems. It may be compared with chess game: it is not possible to understand the game merely by looking at individual pieces, it is in relation to each other, that their movement needs to be understood and the whole chess game requires holistic approach.

Another aspect of system’s theory is studying of equilibrium and adaptation propensities. All systems have a self-
regulatory mechanism through which a state of equilibrium or homeostasis is maintained. The family system receives inputs of information from the environment. It processes, transforms and controls these inputs and directs them towards certain goals, which feed back into the environment. Thus the elements of the family and its environment constantly aim at adapting to each other and go towards a state of equilibrium.

When the family and/or its environment cannot adapt to each other, there exists a state of dis-equilibrium. The reason may be internal changes induced by members but also because of inputs from the external environment. The family, in its effort to maintain a state of homeostasis, may not always serve the best interests of all its members. Thus, the goal of family social work may be protection of family rights and promotion of family responsibilities and not maintaining homeostasis.

In family assessment, ‘family perception’ is an important variable. It determines how an event is viewed by a family (as a unit) as well as by individual members of a family. Perception, therefore, affects the levels of stress the family feels. One event, say loss of job of father, may be very stressful for a family but may not be so by another family living in the same community. The same event is not viewed in the same way by all the people in one family, by all families in one community, or by all communities in one society. Perceptions among families differ and perceptions among family members also differ.

Psycho-analytical approach: Freud assumed that human personality has three dimensions: id, ego and super-ego. Id contains the sexual and aggressive instincts and is located in unconscious mind. Id works on pleasure principle and emphasizes on immediate gratification. Ego is the conscious and rational mind and works on reality
principle. The third, super-ego consists of conscience and ego-ideal. There may be one or more family members who are in perpetual conflict between Id and super-ego that may hamper their normal social functioning.

Sigmund Freud describes how the Ego uses a range of mechanisms to handle the conflict between the Id, the Ego, the Super ego, which is why these mechanisms are often called ‘Ego defense mechanisms’. Commonly used defense mechanisms are rationalization, displacement, suppression, regression, etc. When a family member makes excessive use of these defence mechanisms and does not let other family members realize the gravity and consequences of problems, it calls for intervention.

In the case of family therapy, ‘transference’ plays a very crucial role. Transference refers to any distortion of a present relationship because of unresolved (and mostly unconscious) issues left over from early relationships. This may facilitate or hamper the process of recovery from the crisis. Therapists assess and make conscious use of transference in their therapeutic process.

**Family Stress Management**

The family should be a place to find rest and comfort from the problems of the world, but, at times, it becomes a source of even more tension. The trend to romanticize the family, to talk only about its strengths and achievements, makes us ignore the pressure it is under in the current pace of life. A more realistic approach is to recognize that families today are under a great deal of pressure, more than ever before. Stress and tension have entered in daily activities — fast pace of life, cut throat competition in almost all walks of life — finding suitable livelihood options, paying rents, no support system for rearing children, trying to meet expectations of children and parents, unemployed or divorced child, frail elderly parent — there can be
countless reasons that increase stress. Economic and psychological pressures are high — for some families, overwhelming. There is loss of recreation and leisure and family members have least time to spend with each other and relax.

Family stress is defined as pressure or tension in the family system. It is disturbance in the steady state of the family. Stress is change, which, by itself is neither good nor bad. It depends on how the organism (in this case the family) responds to a stressor event. A stressor event is an event that has the potential to cause change in the family because it disturbs the status quo. It is not synonymous with stress. Stressor events may be internal (events that begin from someone inside the family, such as taking drugs, suicide, etc.) or external (events that begin from someone or something outside the family, such as earthquakes, terrorism, the inflation rate, or the cultural attitudes towards women and minorities; normative (events that are expected over the family life cycle, such as birth, adolescents, marriage, ageing, death) or non-normative (events that are unexpected such as winning a lottery, war, being taken hostage, often but not always disastrous); ambiguous (not being able to get facts surrounding the events) or non-ambiguous (clear facts available about the events: how, when, where, who is affected, etc.); chronic (a situation that has long duration, e.g. diabetes, gender/racial discrimination) or acute (events that last a short time but is severe, e.g., accident, losing limb, losing job) and cumulative (events that pile up so that there is no resolution before the next one occurs) and isolated (an event that occurs alone, at least with no other events apparent at that time).

It may be noted that family stress, at times, is normal and desirable. Family stress management, therefore, becomes a major challenge to families today. The families in trouble
are often not sick families; rather, they are those that simply are unable to deal with the volume of events they are facing. Being stressed does not necessarily mean a weak family. It simply means that they are in a threatening situation. When cause of stress is within the family system, it is taken as internal context. It may be noted that families do not live in isolation; they are part of a larger context. The external context is one over which the family has no control. Changes in larger societal context — world wars, cold wars, natural calamities, terrorism, change in political scenario — all may create stress inside the family system.

It is important to understand the family stress management process. The fundamental assumptions of family stress theory are:

a) Not all families are the same
b) Not all events that stress families should be viewed the same
c) Not all families have the same values and beliefs. Differences must be looked for and taken into consideration.

In order to assess and mediate family stress, social work practitioners study two different contexts — internal and external. In internal context family has control and in external context, it has no control. External context is also called ‘family’s ecosystem’ and it has tremendous influence on how the family perceives events and manages (or fails to manage) whatever stress is produced. External context is studied in terms of ‘time’ or historical context (the time in history in which the event has occurred, like, war, market crash) and ‘place’ in which a particular family finds itself (for example, earthquake). This apart, family is assessed in terms of other systems in the social environment or contexts — economic context (week economy, unemployment), developmental context
(pregnancies in teens or in late thirties), hereditary context (ailments) and **cultural context** (minority or ethnic groups, incongruency between rules and norms of sub-culture and mainstream culture).

Reuben Hill (1958) formulated ABC-X family stress model that helps in assessment of level of family stress and need for intervention, as given in the schema below.

A) The provoking event or stressor  
B) The family’s resources or strengths at the time of event  
C) The meaning attached to the event by the family (individually or collectively).

The model brings out that degree of stress experienced by the family is the outcome of sum of the stressor event, its collective perception by the family members and the coping resources that are available to the family. For instance, father in the family loses job because of market crash is a stressor event. How the family members perceive this event would somewhat depend on the available resources the family has — if family owns substantial economic assets that would be easily used till the time father gets job again,
it would not be treated as an event causing critical stressful condition or crisis. On the other hand, if the family is poverty afflicted or does not have any savings, the said stressor event would cause much damage to the harmony of the family.

Family practitioners intervening in stress management process, help the family assess their resources against the perceived potential damage stressor event can cause. Advocacy with the family’s social environment (for example, fighting for the rights at father’s workplace, arranging for financial assistance under government’s poverty alleviation programme) is another strategy social work professionals make use of.

Family resources are not the same as coping strategies. Families with many resources may have trouble in coping with stress. It is not always true that rich families can cope better with stress than poorer families.

**Family Crisis and Family Therapy**

**Family Crisis**

Family stress sometimes results in crisis. A family crisis is (a) a disturbance in the equilibrium that is so overwhelming, (b) a pressure that is so severe or (c) a change that is so acute that the family system is blocked, immobilized and incapacitated. At least for a time, family does not function. Family boundaries are no longer maintained, customary roles and tasks can no longer function at optimum levels, physically or psychologically. When crisis happens, the family “hits bottom” and then one hopes, reaches a “turning point”. This is the point at which the recovery process begins. The family can end up even stronger than before the crisis occurred.

Family practitioners look at following aspects while assessing level of family crisis and designing intervention:
Stressor events: They are external or internal (details given in above section: family stress management). They are inevitable in family life.

Coping ability: The ability to cope is important in ascertaining which families are vulnerable to crisis. There is a major caution: coping does not always mean health and well-being for the family. Sometimes going into crisis is better than adapting over and over again. Assessment of coping gives the family practitioners insight into the differential responses to stressor event (fight, flight or compromise) that may or may not have detrimental effects on individuals or families. It is also necessary to study those families that failed to cope, fell into crisis, but recovered.

Coping process has structural, psychological and philosophical dimensions.

1) The **structural dimension** refers to the family system boundaries, as defined by the family’s perceptions regarding who is in and who is outside those boundaries. Boundary ambiguity is major variable leading to family crisis. Two types of boundary ambiguity are observed — high and low. High boundary ambiguity is further of two types — **physical absence and psychological presence**: families where there is a preoccupation with the absent member, such as families of kidnapped children. The process of grieving and restructuring cannot begin because the facts surrounding the loss of the person are not clear. Second type of high boundary ambiguity is ‘**physical presence and psychological absence**’ which is seen among intact families where a member is physically there but not emotionally available to the system like families having a member with dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, alcoholism, drug dependence or preoccupation with work. In low boundary ambiguity,
two main types are there — one, ‘physical absence and psychological absence’ — families where a member is both gone and grieved. They may still be thought of and missed, but there is no longer a preoccupation with the loss. The system has been restructured without that person. Examples are families in which a death has been fully grieved or a divorce has been fully assimilated by a spouse. Second, ‘physical presence and psychological presence’ — these are intact families where members are both physically and psychologically inside the system. An example is a companionate model of marriage. There is no dysfunction in low boundary ambiguity.

The role of family practitioners is to bring a state where there is low ambiguity and process of boundary maintenance is initiated. Entries and exits of family members across the family life span are inevitable; thus births, adolescents leaving home for college or work, marriages, retirements and deaths continuously affect the family system’s process of boundary maintenance. Learning to clarify family boundaries after a loss or acquisition, is therefore, one of the most critical developmental tasks required of families over the life cycle, which if not done requires social work professional’s help.

2) The psychological dimension of the family’s coping pattern is illustrated by denial, a defense mechanism that is used frequently by stressed families. Although denial can be viewed as preventing cognitive preparation for an event of family loss, it can be simultaneously viewed as “buying time” so that the family is able to manage that loss. Denial, therefore, is not always resistance, as some family practitioners believe. It also may be a way for a family to protect itself while it accepts painful news gradually, bit by bit, as it learns how to manage that news. In short
term, family denial is functional; in the long term it is dysfunctional. Denial most often is found in families in which the stressor situation or event is ambiguous in itself. That is, the family cannot determine clearly if the family member in question is in or out of the family system. In more clearly bounded situations of stress, such as death, family denial is less likely to occur. To break the family’s denial pattern if it has gone on for a long time, family professionals must give members support as well as information to (a) help them to change the situation or, if that is impossible, (b) help them to change their response to the situation. Only after the barrier of denial is broken and the problem is fully recognized and faced can the family begin the process of managing, reorganizing and moving on to a lower stress level.

3) The **philosophical dimension** of the family’s coping comprises the family’s values and belief systems that may predict its vulnerability to stress and also management. Family belief systems and value orientations will influence how families perceive stressor events and how they cope with, manage or solve problems. The more **fatalistically oriented** the family’s belief system, the more passive they will be in their management of stress. The more **mastery-oriented** the family’s belief system, the more active they will become in their management of stress. Although a fatalistic belief system may be functional in the short run when a disastrous event strikes and nothing can be done to reverse it, that same belief system may be dysfunctional in the long run because it will interfere with social change. If a person clings to a belief that an event is the result of the fate, karma, God’s will, or some other higher power, it will block the process that can change the situation, change the use of resources, or change the perception of what is
occurring. Believing that one has mastery over a situation aids the process of developing active behaviours to manage the event or stimulate a revolution in the family that will change the family’s perception of reality and thereby, their way of managing stress.

Role of family practitioners is to bring out desirable change in the value orientation of the family if it is affecting its adaptability to positive change. Family practitioners target behaviours of passivity, isolation, feelings of helplessness and distrust. They help families in developing options, making choice, getting information, finding peer support group and developing future plans, thereby leading them towards empowerment.

Researches have shown that family adaptability (flexibility) is the key to crisis management. Further, perception of stressor event is the primary predictor of how and whether a family can manage their stress. Social work practitioners facilitate families under crisis to develop realistic perception of the event and adapt to the changing demands of the social environment. They also perform advocacy role if they find that family is being victimized and denied its rights with respect to any system in the social environment.

**Family Therapy**

Family therapy can be defined as the psychotherapeutic treatment of a natural social system, the family, using conjoint interpersonal interview as its basic medium. Family therapy is concerned with family groups having problems that members are unable to handle themselves and which are affecting their normal social functioning. In family therapy, therapeutic group is family. Approach is transactional and focus is on family system and goal is higher degree of functioning in the family system, method is conjoint family therapy.
Theoretical frameworks used in family therapy:


2) GST model.

Conducting family therapy: Engagement is the process beginning with the therapist’s very first contact with the family. It ends when therapist and family have entered into a working relationship which is firm enough to enable both of them to withstand the painfulness of change, but flexible enough to make continued change possible. The process may take few minutes to months, depending upon the problem and openness of family.

Initial Contact: The family may have come own its own or referred to. At this time family has a lot of inhibitions and hesitations, the morale is low and there is self-doubt and conflicts in dyadic relationships, causes of which may be external or internal.

The first interview: In the first interview, therapist initiates the process of rapport formation, seeks as much information as the family easily provides including the apparent felt problems.

Assessment: Beginning from the first interview itself, family therapist seeks to gain more and more information about the family dynamics, socialization of family norms and family ecology. By observing interaction of family members with each other during conjoint interviews, therapist appraises the following indicators:

1) Communication pattern: Communication is the basic attribute of intensity of any relationship. Therapist studies negative or positive communication patterns between various dyads like spouse, parent-child, siblings, in-laws; is negative communication pattern
Basic Social Science Concepts

directed towards a particular family member (being scapegoat); is it mutual or one-sided; is it a recent behavioural manifestation or a part of socialization of family norms, etc. It may be noted that in studying communication pattern of the family, it is important to look at transactions, which are value-loaded interactions between family members depending upon the historical and relational contexts.

2) **Family cohesion**: Therapist assesses the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another. He/she tries to find reasons for problematic levels of cohesions (disengaged or enmeshed), level of dependence of family members on a particular member for making decisions and personality types of members who dominate others or are being dominated.

3) **Role performance**: Family therapist looks at the degree of role commitment among respective family members, inter and intra role conflicts between members, role competence, evaluates if sex role or age role stereotypes, if any.

4) **Decision making**: Autocratic decision making pattern or sitting over problems and not making decisions at all, arbitrary selection of options, may be the problem areas which family therapist needs to cater to.

5) **Family adaptability**: Family therapist may find that either family members are too rigid to adapt themselves to the needed change or may be too flexible and get carried away by trivial matters.

6) **Family development**: A family has the responsibility to facilitate individual member’s developmental task. Family therapist may observe that family fails to meet the developmental needs of members like child, adolescent or aged member that needs intervention.
Therapeutic Process

Assessment and therapeutic process often go hand in hand. During conjoint interviews, therapist interacts with family members and tries to amend, through communication and persuasion, the problem areas that he/she has studied. The therapist may gradually help family members to adopt positive communication pattern, switch to separated-connected cohesion level from disengaged or enmeshed ones, and move to structured-flexible adaptability from rigid and chaotic one. He/she may help development of knowledge, attitudes and skills towards democratic family functioning, provide skills training for enrichment of family dynamics and development at each stage of family life span for strengthening family’s interactions with its social ecology. Therapist may disseminate information about family resources such as laws, policies and implementation systems and services, depending upon the problems encountered by the family.

Family Life Enrichment Programme

At the preventive and promotive level, family life enrichment programmes are designed. Aim of these family life enrichment programmes is to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills of family members that reinforce a democratic family life. Such developmental activities would reduce the problems that the families face due to factors from within the family as well as those from its environment. They would lessen the need for remedial intervention in the long run.

Family life enrichment programme should address development and strengthening of democratic values and practices in the family that in turn expand cordial relations. Family practitioners, in this regard, may provide strategies
for better communication between various dyadic relationships such as appreciate each others’ efforts, express feelings of love and care, understand others’ point of view, spend time in discussing day’s schedule, etc., so that family interactions and relationships become harmonious. Families may be helped by the family practitioners in preparation for different stages of family life span such as pre-marriage counseling, information and counseling for planning family, child birth, adolescence, retirement. Social workers also provide information about functioning of various systems in the social environment of the family and may do advocacy for better interaction between family and other systems.

Social workers have a challenging role in attitude development in favour of a democratic family life, especially in a patriarchal social structure like in most parts of India. There should be equal allocation of family resources among members whereas girl child often gets least, especially in families with scarce resources. Husbands should be encouraged to share household responsibilities especially when their spouse is working. Family members should have freedom of choices in life like when to marry and which career to choose. In many families girls are married off early and parents dominate the career decisions of children. Family members — young, old and children should democratically decide on family matters, depending upon their age, experience. Family members should develop the process of peaceful resolution of conflict where the issue is discussed and settled amicably rather than adhering to non-communication or heated arguments.

Family issues that may form part of family life enrichment programmes would be removing biases against inter-caste and inter-religion marriages, abolishing certain harmful practices like dowry, child abuse especially against girl child, violence and exploitation against women, desertion
and bigamy, extra-marital affairs and promote women's right to parental property and matrimonial property.

There is a need to develop a comprehensive family enrichment programme covering the above aspects. Strategies and modalities for family enrichment programme would include preparation of training materials and audio-visual aids like short films, booklets, leaflets, calendars, posters, etc. Use of mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, folk media such as plays, dances, songs and stories would be quite effective. Agencies like schools, colleges, industries, family planning centers, hospitals and health centers, agencies for children, women, the aged and the disabled, community centers, etc. There can be convergence with existing programmes on family planning, ante natal care, integrated Child Development services, and the like, for incorporation of family enrichment component. There is a need to train government and non-government functionaries in carrying out family enrichment programmes.

**Conclusion**

Families are just not the ideal cozy place with love and happiness. They may also have problems where interactions between family members may go incongruent or family's interface with social environment may become dysfunctional. Families may be stressful, in crisis or even disorganize and dissolve. Social work intervention is required at the preventive level for vulnerable families, at curative and rehabilitative level for disorganized families, at ameliorative level for families with crisis and at promotive level for enhancing well-being in families.

Family practitioners make use of general systems theory and psycho-analytical theory as conceptual framework for assessment and intervention for families in problem.
Family stress management is a major task of family practitioners. It is a function of interplay between perception of family members regarding the intensity of stressor event and the resources they have for coping. Stressor may or may not be threatening that is, leading to crisis. Family crisis occurs when normal coping pattern of the family fails to deal effectively with the stressor event. Family practitioners appraise boundary maintenance (or ambiguity) and coping patterns (structural, psychological or philosophical dimensions) in studying family crisis.

Family therapy makes use of conjoint interpersonal interview as its basic medium for intervention. With transactional approach, therapist looks at communication pattern, adaptability, cohesiveness, decision-making and response towards meeting the developmental needs of individual family members.

Family life enrichment programmes aim at developing democracy at the smallest unit of society that is family. Its scope includes removing biases against age and gender, developing companionship and harmony and bringing attitudinal changes in favour of democratic values.

References


Introduction

In the contemporary times, families are encountering a plethora of new and old problems. It is often held that social forces like industrialization, urbanization, technological advancement, inventions in medical field, rise in economy and standards of living, population increase have resulted in making the daily life situations more complex and difficult. As mentioned in the earlier units of this block, the concept and roles of family have undergone significant changes in response to these social forces. Gender roles have changed, as both parents usually work outside the home to meet the increasing economic needs of the family. Migration has contributed to increase in number of women headed families. Important roles of family like providing recreation and companionship have been out-sourced. There is decreasing time for leisure because most family members, adults and children, are working longer hours outside the home or are otherwise heavily involved in extra familial activities. Families, which were once havens for individuals who were stressed by external pressures, are increasingly challenged to meet emotional needs of individual family members.

Families are faced with many unique problems as a result of societal change. For example, industrialization and

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urbanization have resulted in migration of young family members to urban centers in search of better livelihood options. As a result, joint family system is breaking up. Further, among others, improvement in public health system has led to increase in life-expectancy and number and proportion of elderly have grown significantly in the general population. Care and support to elderly have become an issue of concern for almost all the families. Numbers of people living below poverty line have increased substantially and economic hardship has, in general, risen sharply. Women have stepped out of the four walls of household for economic contribution to the family and have lesser of time available to perform their traditional role of providing care to children and elderly relatives.

Basic civic amenities like health care, nutrition, education, housing, safe drinking water, and the like are becoming luxuries, beyond the reach of many families. Overpopulation accompanying industrialization has resulted in transportation and commutation problems, pollution, and emergence of innumerable life-style related diseases. Societal alienation has led to a steady increase in mental disorders including self-destructive behaviours like drug and alcohol abuse, suicide and violence.

This chapter would focus on certain challenges like marital distress, divorce, separation, dealing with chronic physical ailments, ageing and death of family members. It would also deal with economic issues that hamper smooth functioning of the family in the context of present socio-economic milieu.

**Marital Distress**

Marital relationship is commonly initiated with the belief that both the marital partners are entering into the relationship for the lifetime. Their relationship is defined
by love, sharing caring for each other, intimacy and confidence. They consider that they have found a ‘right’ person and the relationship is ‘special’ and ‘exclusive’. Couples begin a lifetime journey with the conviction that whatever obstacles would come in their way their ‘special’ relationship would overcome those problems successfully and would endure the test of time. Contrary to this, the reality of many marital relationships clearly paints a picture of erosion of satisfaction, commitment and stability resulting in distressed, incongruent relationships. Since life is increasingly stressful and challenging, imagining a relationship without conflicts would be quite difficult. Most of these problems are relatively minor, whereas others are severe and challenge the stability of marriages. There are varieties of possible marital problems and more diverse are the ways couples perceive them. In this section, we would focus on the processes that pass through the psyche of marital couples going for dissolution of marriage and the impact of divorce/separation on marital partners and children.

Increasing rate of divorce is a worldwide trend, which is just one indicator that marriages experience problems and conflicts. The word divorce draws images of divided families, separated couples, forgotten commitments, vulnerable children, long and expensive legal battles, hostility, bitterness, resentment and economic hardship. It is quite understandable that people do not attach positive value to divorce. There can be many reasons of marital discord, which we have discussed in earlier units. Common reasons reported are dowry, abuse, violence, alcoholism, drug addiction, extramarital affairs, major personality clashes and the like. Value systems are changing and emphasis is more on individualism than familism. For many adults, self-development, self-fulfillment and career have fostered a declining commitment to family including spouses and children. This makes marriage and other
Basic Social Science Concepts

intimate relationships fragile and vulnerable. Singlehood, cohabitation, childlessness and premarital and extramarital sexual relations are becoming more acceptable while opposition to divorce has weakened. Therefore, we observe that economic, social and psychological cost of ending marriage relationship is affordable today than ever before. Earlier social norms were more strict and rigid and fear of stigma and loss of face was much more compared to present scenario.

Theoretical framework to understand incongruent marital relationships

It may be noted that marital relationship over the course of family life cycle changes considerably. The early family life-cycle stages are particularly difficult for many couples as adjustment may take a longer gestation period whereas later life stages are frequently easier. Marital quality across the life cycle can best be described by a U shaped curve, with lowest quality during the child rearing stage and the highest levels early in the marriage (before the birth of children) and after the children are grown and leave the home.

Gottman (1994) has identified two types of marriages: regulated and non-regulated. In regulated marriages, couples are able to overcome difficulties through mutually devised ways and strategies and their communication patterns are positive and goal directed. On the other hand, in non-regulated marriages, couples fail to resolve conflicts in a mature way and even minor disagreements compound to build negativity and distress into the relationship.

Research studies show that negative interactions are much more in the case of distressed couples as compared to successful couples. Pattern of interaction is defined by criticisms, defensiveness, contempt and withdrawal. Negativity and distancing often begin when complaints are
expressed or viewed by partners as criticisms and is taken with high emotional reactivity. Expressed or perceived criticisms attack the ‘positive construction of self’ of other partner, who in turn reacts or becomes defensive to protect self-ego. A ‘person’ is labeled as ‘wrong’ than the behaviour, which disrupts the sense of self. As a result, in a recursive manner, criticism and defensiveness build on one another and patterns of interaction become increasingly more personal, attacking and identity disrupting. These critical attacks if not restrained, often erode the foundation of mutual love and respect in the relationship and replace it with mutual contempt. This increases the likelihood that partners will withdraw from one another. This evolving contempt for the partner represents an important turning point in the deconstruction of relationship. Marital couples frequently start focusing on the negative aspects of the partners that bother most and partner is perceived as unreasonable and inflexible. As this continues, it becomes more difficult for partners to believe that there is hope for the relationship. When a certain threshold of negativity is reached, it does almost irreversible damage to the relationship.

When negativity starts reaching to a more destructive level, at the cognitive level, couples begin to revise the history of their relationship, recalling and reinforcing only negative experiences or interactions. Stated otherwise, distressed couples recast the marital history selectively in negative terms. This leads to development of the belief that the troubled relationship not only has no future, but also did not have fond memories of the past. Ignorance, distancing, avoidance become the norm in interactions with each other. All this results in ‘deconstruction’ of the relationship between distressed couples characterized by love, intimacy and trust. The relationship is reconstructed and dominated by the belief that ‘it cannot work’ anymore.
Researchers have often tried to look into the gender difference, if any, in conflict management in marital relationship. Studies show that when men go into a conflict management mode, they limit their choices concerning intimacy because they are overly focused on preventing conflict from erupting. They tend to avoid or withdraw from it — sometimes at all costs. Women, on the other hand, opt for discussion and sharing of the feelings of grief and disappointment. Thus, there is a common mismatch between the coping style or conflict management between most of the distressed couples, which fuels the negativity within the relationship. Women try hard to pursue and men distance or avoid. Women interpret distancing as lack of interest or love. Women voice their concerns about withdrawn husbands and men take it as criticism on their way of handling things and even self-esteem and further withdraw themselves. Women feel humiliated, uncared for and unwanted and start believing that their husbands do not care about the relationship. For most women, lack of talking is lack of caring. On the other hand, men complain that their wives get upset too easily. Men distance themselves from their partners during times of conflict in an effort to minimize the emotional tensions that seem to be at the heart of the crisis in the relationship. Since there exists gender difference in management of conflict, each partner may conclude that the problem exists with the personality of his or her spouse. This initiates patterns of criticisms and negativity that ultimately becomes the foundation for contempt and distress. These gender differences can be attributed to cultural and biological factors.

Thus, it may be concluded that the factors that influence marital discord are spouses’ perception and definition of problems, gender orientation during socialization, their value and belief system, past marital history, individual
histories within their families of origin, current state of mind and prevailing mores within the society.

**Impact of divorce/separation**

Problematic relationships often have deleterious effects on the physical and mental health of persons concerned. This is all the more true when an intimate and close relationship like that of husband-wife gets dissolved. Relationship with spouse forms the foundation of family life and directly or indirectly influences many other relations like that of in-laws. When marital relationship becomes incongruent, the foundation of family life is shaken. This has severe consequences on the health of the distressed couples, though at a varying rate.

Researches bring out that at physically, risk of diseases like asthma, arthritis, headaches, peptic ulcers and heart diseases increases more than double among couples facing marital discord. Chronic sadness, pessimism, unremitting tension, hostility and suspiciousness are common feelings among distressed couples, which in turn increase the chances of physical ailments. In fact, some public health researchers maintain that chronic mental distress is a more serious public health risk than smoking (Goleman, 1995).

Many research findings convincingly show that marital distress and ongoing unresolved marital conflicts have multidimensional harmful effects on children such as health problems, poor academic performance, poor social competence, depression, withdrawal, greater release of stress related hormones and the like (Cowan and Cowan, 1990). This is applicable for both the sexes.

Divorce affects even social image and social prestige. Although public disapproval of divorce has softened, divorced individuals still confront stigma. Friends are lost, rejection is felt as friends and others assess and attribute blame. Elaborate ‘accounts’ are developed to explain the
divorce to self and to others, and many married people exclude the divorced from social gatherings and friendship networks to avoid embarrassment to both the parties.

Economic consequences are also quite grave especially for women and children. A huge majority of women, in patriarchal society like India, are hardly encouraged to be economically self-reliant. Even in duel earning families, economic constraint is definitely felt by spouses as the total monthly income reduces substantially. Most children and women after divorce experience a sharp decline in their standard of living. Economic hardship is associated with lowered parental well-being, which makes parenting less supportive and less effective. Parents are so engrossed in their sorrows and despair that disciplining is often inconsistent and harsh. This leads to distressed and impaired socio-emotional functioning among children.

**Gender differences in coping with divorce and separation:** It is often held that women in general, are more deeply committed to marriage, parenthood and family life than men. As a result, they devote substantially more time and energy to marriage than men. Having invested more in relationship, it is reasonable that the dissolution of the relationship inflicts greater emotional pain for women than for men. Other factors that certainly contribute to women’s post divorce distress include their worsened economic position and strain of striking balance in employment and single parenting.

Studies show that unhappiness and psychological stress rise and reach at peak levels during the pre-divorced period, then subside within 2 years following divorce.

**Abuse and Violence**

Family is often idealized to be a place of security, love, affection, warmth and intimacy. However, family may also become a location of abuse, exploitation, violence and
contemporary problems in family system

neglect. in this section, we would be focusing on the issue of abuse and exploitation within the family system, where one or more family members are either perpetrators or victims of abuse and violence.

historically and traditionally, women and children are considered the victims in family abuse and violence. more often than not, women are socialized to take in abuse and violence against them as ‘normal’ and right of the men folk especially husband. many research findings bring out that wives, even after suffering from domestic violence, never complain to outside support agencies like police, women’s groups, commissions, etc., as slapping, beating, thrashing and the like by their husband is not considered anything abnormal and does not constitute ‘violence’ in their conceptual framework. other reasons of non-reporting or under-reporting of incidences of violence are fear of loss of face in the society (many women feel: people would laugh at us, may tease us, may ridicule us), no trust on the outside agencies like police, women’s commission, groups (belief that these agencies would not be able to make us reach at a satisfactory winning position and we may have to reconcile with our husbands who then would become ‘uncontrollable’) and socialization (even well educated women may believe that there is nothing wrong if men beat us). traditional religious literature also reinforces acceptance of violence against women as ‘normal’ (tulsidas says in ramcharitmanas: dhol, ganwar, pashu or naari, yerh sab tadan ke adhikari. meaning: drum, idiot, animals and females deserve bashing and thrashing). added to this, women being considered physically weaker are more vulnerable to be victims of violence.

in the same way, violence against children is not something new to our social life. slapping, beating, denying food, verbal abuse in the form of scolding, abusing, have been an instrument of disciplining the child in the socialization
process. In joint family system, verbal and physical violence has been a prerogative of not only parents but also of all the elders. Interestingly, a huge majority of parents still believe that without verbal and physical violence, children would become ill mannered, disobedient, and notorious. Likewise, corporal punishment is also seen as a highly essential tool in disciplining the children by most of the teachers.

Domestic violence is exhibited in several ways: physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, economic deprivation or threats of violence. There are a number of dimensions of abuse and violence like verbal, physical, psychological, sexual, social, which are often overlapping. Incidences of abuse and violence may be sporadic or quite frequent. There may be variations in terms of severity of violence: mild, moderate or very severe upto homicide.

**Gender and violence:** Patriarchal structure has led to justification of gender-specific domestic violence. It is reflected in various forms: the most dreadful is female foeticide that is increasing in Indian society and clearly gets reflected in skewed sex ratio in the nation’s demographic scenario. The situation is quite grave as many people from apparently all cross-sections of the society are detecting the sex of the unborn child and if it happens to be a girl, putting dust into the eyes of social legislations and control mechanisms, people easily snatch the right to life of a girl child by getting it aborted. It may be noted that women themselves perpetuate violence against females. Unequal resource distribution in the family in terms of facilities for health, nutrition, education, development is seen to the disadvantage of girl child in majority of economically stressed families.

Men are traditionally socialized to funnel their repressed emotions like frustration, hurt, disappointment through
violence, which is generally against women and children. In addition, our social constructions of masculinity include the notions of power and dominance. Violence is, thus seen as legitimate and even women are made to feel so. Thus, we may infer that gender has a close link with domestic violence.

What makes domestic violence a precarious issue is its presence in the domestic front yet forceful negation or avoidance in public platform. Domestic violence historically has been viewed as a private family matter that need not involve outside intervention. Even police and judiciary showed reluctance in making arrest and convicting the perpetrators on account of domestic violence because largely it is viewed as a misdemeanor offense. The credit of raising voice against domestic violence goes to women’s movement in 1970s, however, violence against men is not unheard of.

Researchers have enlisted personality traits of perpetrators, which include blaming others for problems/feelings, closed-mindedness, cruelty to children and/or animals, hypersensitivity, jealousy, manipulation through guilt, objectification of victim, use of force during sex, threats of violence, unrealistic expectations, verbal abuse and others. Other factors associated with domestic violence include heavy alcohol consumption, mental illness and classism.

**Theoretical Framework**

There are varied theories giving insight into multidimensional features of domestic violence and abuse.

**Social learning:** This theory proposes that violence is a ‘learnt’ behaviour. People who have experienced violence in their early socialization years are more likely to use violence in the home than are those who have experienced little or no violence. Stated differently, children who
experience violence themselves or who witness violence between their parents are more likely to use violence when they grow up. This supports the idea that violence is learnt. Family is the institution where people learn the roles of husband and wife, parent and child and also violence. They further learn to justify being violent when they see either or both of their parents using violence and explaining its usage. For example, mother may say to her child: you are bad, stubborn and deserve to be spanked.

**Social situational/stress and coping theory** explains why violence is used in some situations and not in others. It postulates that abuse and violence occur because of two main factors. The first is structural stress and the lack of coping resources in a family. For instance, in low income families, violence is used to cope with frustration of having inadequate financial resources. The second factor is the cultural norms concerning the use of force and violence. In contemporary societies, violence in general, and violence towards children in particular, is normative.

**Resource Theory:** Goode (1971) gave this model. The basic assumption is – violence may be used as compensation for lack of sufficient resources. For instance, a husband who wants to get respect and status in the family, but has little education, has a job low in prestige and income and lacks interpersonal skills may choose to use violence to maintain the dominant position. Abusers’ efforts to dominate their partners have been attributed to low self-esteem or feelings of inadequacy, unresolved childhood conflicts, the stress of poverty and the like.

**Exchange theory:** It proposes that partner abuse and child abuse be governed by the principle of costs and benefits. Abuse is used when the rewards are greater than the cost. The private nature of the family, the reluctance of social institutions and agencies to intervene reduce the costs of abuse and violence. The cultural approval of violence as
both expressive and instrumental behaviour raises the potential rewards for violence. The most significant reward is social control or power. A causalist view of domestic violence is that it is a strategy to gain or maintain power and control over the victim.

Sociobiological theory: Smuts (1992), in this theory, argues that male aggression against females often reflects male reproductive striving. It has been postulated that both human and non-human male primates use aggression against females to reduce the likelihood that females will mate with other males. Thus, males use aggression to control female sexuality to their reproductive advantage.

Feminist theory: It says that subordination of women and justification of violence and abuse against them has been traditionally and culturally reinforced in numerous ways in a patriarchal social structure. Women are more often dependent on the spouse for economic subsistence. This dependence means that women have fewer options and resources to help them cope with violence and abuse. More often than not, they are forced to silently tolerate the violent behaviour of spouse as taking strong step to move out of wedlock is not feasible.

Lenore Walker gave model of a Cycle of Violence which consists of three phases: the Honeymoon Phase is characterized by overwhelming feelings of remorse and sadness by the batterer after violent behaviour. Some batterers walk away from the situation, while others shower their victims with love and affection. Next is Tension Building Phase. During this stage the victims try to calm the batterer down to avoid any major violent confrontations. There is poor communication, fear and tension between the victim and batterer. The third stage, Acting-out Phase is denoted by outbursts of violent, abusive incidents. During this stage the batterer attempts to dominate the victim with the use of violence.
Activism, initiated by advocacy groups and feminist groups, has led to a better understanding of the effects of domestic violence on victims and families and has brought about changes in the judiciary’s response. Men’s behaviour change programmes focus on the prevention of further violence within the family and the safety of women and children. The programme broadly covers the impact of violence on family and children, examine the attitudes, values and behaviours that lead to choice to use violence and aim to bring out necessary change in the attitude and behaviour of perpetrators.

**Economic Stress**

Family as a primary institution is expected to meet the basic and developmental needs of its family members and provide them security and fulfillment. Resources are accumulated, created and disbursed among various family members as per their needs. However, there can be situations when family members come in conflict with each other (for example, money spent on education of children at the cost of medical and health needs of elderly members) or denied their rightful share (say, girl child not allowed schooling or opportunity for skill enhancement) or even fail to acquire adequate resources from systems in the larger social environment (unemployment, underemployment, poverty).

Though, in the context of family, love, affection, care, interpersonal relationship are often given priority, economic condition of family vis-à-vis outside social environment plays a very important role. In fact, economic condition of the family, directly or indirectly, subtly or incongruously, influences the quality of marital and family life. Happiness and satisfaction in relationship, more often than not, is largely a function of the economic resources that are available to individuals and families. Resources
are used to meet our most basic needs — food, clothing and shelter — and if resources are plentiful, they can be easily allocated to satisfy the comforts and luxuries we desire. Unfortunately, most families possess limited resources and must manage them in an effort to meet their needs and desires. The management of resources can be a source of stress. Resources can result in stress when there is (a) disagreement about their use and (b) concern about their availability.

Research indicates that economic factors (e.g., unemployment, low income) have a negative effect on the mental health and well being of individuals. Studies consistently show a relationship between economic strain and distress, including increased levels of anger, hostility, depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and poorer physical health. Further, social costs include diminished relationship quality (marital, parent-child, friendship) and changes in social activities, support and networks.

Let us look at various dimensions of economic stress on family life of an individual.

**Poverty:** It denotes lack of or presence of insufficient resources with the family. In India, there is nearly 42% of the population living below poverty line. They are in absolute poverty and do not have enough resources to have adequate meals three times a day. Children face constraints in developmental opportunities like schooling and skill development. It becomes difficult for a huge majority of people living below poverty line to break the vicious cycle of illiteracy, poverty and poor health for generations together. The adult members are in tension and stress to earn a decent livelihood. Living conditions are sub-human and meeting survival needs is the pressing issue in the minds of family members. Child labour, women involved in commercial sex work, bonded labour, selling
off of children are some of the common outcomes of poverty. Further, 93% of people in India are in unorganized sector, which means that a high majority of them are low paid and do not have security against illness, disability and old age. A substantial proportion of people migrate to places, often the urban centers, for better livelihood.

**Migration:** It has been one of the oldest survival strategies in the history of mankind. Among various reasons for migration, search of better livelihood option has been the prominent pull factor and dehumanizing conditions due to poverty is the major push factor. One vital impact of migration on family is change in its structure and functioning depending on the age, sex of migrating member. Most often men migrate giving way to women headed households at the source. At times, men take with them their wife and children after settling down at places of destination and leaving behind elderly parents to fend for themselves. It has also been observed in many parts of India, that young girls migrate to work as domestic labour, in small scale industries and other such places and later in a relay manner, their siblings and even parents also come to destination places.

At places of destination, mostly urban centers, initially migrants feel lost, alienated, discriminated and home-sick. Most of them belong to poor socio-economic strata and have to take shelter in slums and ghettos characterized by dingy congested unhygienic places that are often a hub of anti-social activities. Migrants too, in order to cope with sudden cultural shock and negative feelings of alienation, unfulfilled needs for love and sex indulge into alcoholism, drug addiction, go to commercial sex workers or involve in extra-marital sex or homosexual relations. In many states like Orissa and Bihar, major source of HIV infection has been migration: migrants return back to their states as HIV carriers and knowingly and unknowingly, infect their
wives or sex-partners. On the other hand, in cities and towns, process of enculturation may force many of the migrant women to involve into commercial sex activities, which, at times, is the only source of subsistence for the entire family.

**Unemployment:** The whole family faces crisis when a family member especially adult male faces unemployment, especially when family is having resource crunch. Men suffer from a lot of psychological discomfort as their major identity is derived from being the bread-earner of the family. The first stage is likely to be disbelief. When unemployment persists beyond a few months or weeks, there may be lack of motivation. Such uncertainty may lead to overeating, alcohol abuse, excessive smoking, and other unhealthy behaviours. With continuing unemployment, there may be anxiety. Loss of self esteem is also the outcome. This may hamper conjugal relationships as wife may lose respect for husband who fails to accomplish the role of bread earner. In addition, unemployment may stimulate fear, anger and irrational outburst by family members. Sometimes the results may include violence or divorce.

**Gender Issues:** There are various dimensions of women’s vulnerability vis-à-vis economic condition of the family. Despite their contribution in countless forms, (such as in agricultural and allied economic activities and more so doing domestic work) they are largely taken as non-workers and their share of work is neither paid nor recognized. Further, in contemporary times, women are equally involved in economic activities outside household just like their male counterparts. However, unlike males, their new economic role has not provided status and comfort to them. Their traditional roles of home management and care giving have remained their primary duties. Most of the women are found struggling to strike a balance between their roles at home and at workplace. It may be restated that women
headed families and single parent families face a lot of economic stress as mentioned earlier.

Needless to mention that patriarchal social structure and associated norms and practices have not provided the due opportunity to majority of girls for their education and acquisition of economic skills. As a result, majority of women are in primary sector working as unskilled labourers devoid of any social security measures. Their proportion in tertiary sector is negligible. As mentioned earlier too, stress and strain of workplace and family responsibilities take a heavy toll of their physical and mental health.

**Gerontological concerns:** Economic stress is also visible in the case of elderly. In old age diseases and health problems increase several folds and the person requires frequent medical attention. This is also the time when after retirement, elderly are hardly left to meet the expenses of medical treatment. The situation becomes more precarious when seen in the light of the fact that a huge majority of elderly (more than 93%) have remained in informal sector and are devoid of retirement benefits and medical insurance. Lastly, since most of the people in unorganized sector depend upon their physical labour to earn livelihood, forced superannuation is common on account of poor physical health and decreasing body strength. Such people hardly get opportunity to save for old age and other contingencies.

**Economic stress and familial relations:** Changing work patterns, diminished occupational opportunities, and massive unemployment and underemployment have created uncertainties and led to domestic upheaval for families. This has led to experimentation with different lifestyles, more impulsive behaviours, new ways of thinking about oneself and greater self-awareness. Dual earner
families are better off but may cause strain in time spending with family members including spouse. Low wage jobs often provide inflexible schedules or rigid shifts. In informal sector most often wages are too low to meet the basic needs of the family. Consequently, low income households are more likely to rely on the labour of children. The proportion of street and working children or child labour is highest in the country. Girl children are dropped out of schools to take care of younger siblings as both parents are engaged in economic activity to feed the family. These children are detoured from childhood to do family labour, suffer not only from lost opportunities but also, later, from a higher likelihood of intergenerational transfer of poverty. Added to this, unorganized sector is characterized by low pay, unskilled, semi-skilled labour and most of the workers spend their economic life in providing basic necessities to their family. Any untimely contingency like accident, disability, chronic illness, death has the potential to push the family below poverty line.

Contrary to this, economically sound families are more likely to provide their members with material resources, which are translated into options regarding neighbourhoods, education and other choices that can enhance the health, wealth and developmental opportunities of their members.

**Ageing, Illness and Disability**

Ageing is a natural and universal process of human life. Any person who lives long enough experiences old age. However, in the contemporary times, elderly population has, more often than not, become a vulnerable section of the society for many reasons. Improvement in public health services and advancement in the field of Medicine has increased the life-expectancy rate and death rate has substantially gone down. This has increased the number
and proportion of elderly in the general population. Thus, care and support of aged relatives is becoming the issue of concern for almost all the families. Added to this, in ancient and medieval times, joint family system was very prominent that ensured security and respect to the elderly. With the advent of social forces like urbanization, industrialization, modernization, and the like, structure and functions of joint family system got altered significantly giving way to nuclear and other family forms.

In joint family system, eldest male used to be the Head of the household and would control the family property and dominate the decision of appropriation of income and other resources. In modern times, the young bread earner heads the family and majority of the elderly have become dependent on their offspring for security and subsistence. The skills and know-how of the elderly were relevant to the then agricultural economy and for a huge majority of them their knowledge and expertise have become redundant in the present technologically sophisticated and fast world.

Further, though old age is not taken as synonymous of disease, more often than not, it does make people vulnerable to reduced strength and many ailments, dropping the functional capacity of the body. Decrease in sensory capacity (Cataract, weakened eye-sight, hardness in hearing, trembling, locomotion problems), cropping up of ailments in the body (arthritis, diabetes, digestive upsets, respiratory problems, etc.), laid back attitude towards health and life-style, all enhance health vulnerability among the elderly. Soldo and Agree (1988) find that approximately eight out of ten older people have at least one chronic disease. Also, organic mental disorders, including Alzheimer’s disease, afflict between 4% and 6% of older people. It may be remembered that our socio-cultural milieu offers hostile environment for people with
mental disorders. This results in lack of awareness about existence of such diseases as well as under-reporting. Many research studies have confirmed that with advancing age, independence in activities of daily living reduced considerably. Many elderly after 70 years or so become frail and dependent on others for small activities like getting up and sitting, taking medicines, etc., and therefore requires constant care and support.

Retirement is another pivotal transition in later life when a person retires from paid work. Details of this are given in Unit 2 (Family Life Cycle). You may recall that working people, males in particular, draw their identity from the economic role that they play. After retirement, not only utilization of excessive free time becomes problem, most often than not, sporadically or frequently, retired elderly may feel low, frustrated and depressed because of loss of identity as an economic being. Financial stringency after retirement and economic dependence on others has been discussed at length in this unit as well as at other places. The economic, social and psychological consequences of retirement generally influences inter-personal relationship with family members.

Elderly women are all the more vulnerable. Their vulnerability is accentuated by their being female in a patriarchal social structure. Since childhood they are socialized to be dependent on their male family members. Illiteracy, ignorance, poor reproductive health due to multiple and repeated pregnancies, chronic malnutrition, lack of social skills, poverty and the like denote the life of elderly women especially in the third world.

In old age, interaction patterns also change within the family and with outside world. In general, two situations are observed: a) when old parents stay with married children and b) children settle their neo-local families after
marriage and old parents are left alone. In the first situation, elderly people have to come to terms that their primary roles as home manager/bread-earner and parent no longer subsist and they have to take a back-seat while leaving the center-stage for their son and daughter-in-law. More often than not, clashes and ego-hassles are seen in the inter-personal relations between elderly and their children. Also, busy children (son and daughter-in-law) hardly have time to sit and chat with elderly parents, which often is perceived as neglect and ignorance on the part of youngsters by the elderly. In the second case, when children after attaining adulthood, leave the family of origin, old parents suffer from empty nest syndrome.

Care-giving has been a crucial issue for most of the families where elderly have become frail and weak. It is not uncommon that elderly develop chronic ailments like diabetes, hypertension, arthritis and require regular care and support. Increasing cost of medical treatment may start pinching on the family budget, especially for families facing resource crunch. Also, especially in urban centers, apartment houses are denoted by limited space. Children and youngsters are increasingly developing a sense of privacy and providing adequate space for the elderly relatives becomes a challenge for such families. Next, with women taking up economic role outside the household, their traditional care-giving role has suffered. Elderly may require special diet (as in cases of diabetes, hypertension, digestive upsets, etc.) or support in doing their daily life activities like getting up and sitting (as in case of arthritis), which may further strain the busy life-style of the lady of the household.

One major challenge that most of us having elderly relatives face is their ‘role-less state’, which has in turn made our senior citizens dependent and vulnerable. In traditional times, elderly would control the family property and income
and their authority was unconditional. In contemporary world, they no longer enjoy ascribed status because many of their crucial roles are withered away. To exemplify, the role played by grandmothers in socialization of grandchildren through active interaction and story-telling is replaced by television and computers. Doctors have replaced their midwifery role. In home management too young daughters-in-law do not require the advice of their elderly relatives.

**Illness and Disability:** Though reduction in functional autonomy is a more common feature of old age, in many cases, families may have similar experiences if any family member suffers from chronic illness of serious nature or faces locomotion or sensory disability. Financial strain is also experienced with increased usage of medical services. Many times, if the bread earner of the family suffers from illness or disability that hampers his ability to work, family may face consequences as unemployment or poverty. Studies have shown that cost of medical treatment is pushing many economically vulnerable families below poverty line.

Further, it may be quite stressing, physically as well as emotionally, for the caregiver to provide constant care to the ill/disabled family member — routine life gets disturbed, environment becomes gloomy and sad, relaxation and recreation are almost gone away, interaction with outside world is reduced. With long term ailment or disability, certain negative feelings and behaviour patterns like high irritability, verbal abuse, curse, frustration, hypochondrias and similar other problems emerge. Parents may pay more attention to the sick family member and others may feel neglected and being avoided. Disability or chronic illness definitely brings crisis in the family and coping depends on a lot of factors like resources (money, time, energy) available with the family, perception and coping skills of family (details given in Unit 4).
Coping With Death, Dying and Grief

Death is an inevitable event that is considered the culmination of life. However, it is more often a predictable event of old age, though death can happen at any age and any point in the lifetime. The loss of a loved one is life's most stressful event and can cause a major emotional crisis. After the death of someone you love, you experience bereavement, which literally means 'to be deprived by death'. After death of a significant other, one may experience a wide range of emotions, even if the death is expected. Many people report of feeling an initial stage of numbness after first learning of death, but there is no real order to the grieving process. Some emotions people may experience include: denial, disbelief, confusion, shock, sadness, anger, humiliation, despair, guilt, etc. These feelings are normal and common reactions to loss. People may not be prepared for the intensity and duration of their emotions and may start doubting the stability of their mental health.

Although the death of a family member is a normal experience and grieving is also normal process, there can be physical, psychological and social consequences for surviving family members.

**Physical consequences:** Bereavement may contribute to many psychosomatic ailments like skin problems, breathing problems, acute acidity, digestive upsets and the like. The already existing medical problems may aggravate. Usage of medical facilities may increase. Studies bring out that functioning of immune system may be impaired during bereavement.

**Psychological consequences:** Intrusive thoughts and avoidance behaviours are correlated with sleep disturbances, which appear to intensify the effects of grief,
resulting in a drop in immunity of the body. Profound emotional reactions may occur. These reactions include anxiety attacks, chronic fatigue, depression and thoughts of suicide. An obsession with the deceased is also a common reaction to death. High rate of depression, insomnia, suicide and anorexia reported by the bereaved may exist in conjunction with consumption of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Individuals with personality disorders are more likely to exhibit complications.

**Social consequences:** Individuals identify bereavement as a social stressor and report a lack of role clarity and social and familial support. Factors that may accompany the death, such as change in the survivor’s social status, loss of roles and conflicts in identity, conflict over family inheritance and loss of income or retirement funds, can contribute to a sense of social isolation.

**Theory of Grieving:** Many theories have been proposed to depict the process of bereavement — the common thread being: grieving follows three basic phases a) shock, denial and disorganization, b) intense separation pain, volatile emotions and active grief work, c) resolution, acceptance and withdrawal of energy from the deceased and reinvestment into the social world.

Let us now look at the factors related to family adaptation to death. **Timing of illness or death** plays a crucial role. Elderly are assumed to experience ‘timely’ death. Early parental loss, death of young spouse and death of a child or grandchild of any evoke rage and a search for an explanation. **Nature of Death** is also quite important factor in adaptation of survivors. Sudden death invokes intense grief while terminal illness prepares the family for the perceived death. Added to this, **stigmatized losses** like death due to AIDS and other such diseases may lead to social ostracism of the family by community which may
further aggravate pain of bereavement. There are certain losses that are unrecognized by society but may be deeply felt by certain family members. For instance, loss of lovers, cohabiters, extra-marital lovers, coworkers, deaths related to pregnancies (miscarriage, elective abortion, still birth, neonatal death, mentally disabled relatives are not recognized by the society.

Further, let us now pay attention to specific losses. A **child’s death** arouses an overwhelming sense of injustice for lost potential, unfulfilled dreams and senseless suffering. Parents may feel responsible for the child’s death, no matter how irrational that may seem. Parents may also feel that they have lost a vital part of their own identity. Similarly, a **spouse’s death** may be very traumatic. In addition to the severe emotional shock, the death may cause a potential financial crisis if the spouse was the family’s main income source. The death may necessitate major social adjustments requiring the surviving spouse to parent alone, adjust to single life and maybe even engage in economic work for family’s subsistence. Widowhood for women is more traumatic than for men as along with loneliness and emotional loss, it also brings social stigma related to norms of patriarchal social structure. **Elderly people** may be especially vulnerable when they lose a spouse because it means losing a lifetime of shared experiences. Death of elderly, though brings emotional pain, is more easily accepted than death of younger family members. A **loss due to suicide** can be among the most difficult losses to bear. They may leave the survivors with a tremendous burden of guilt, anger and shame. Survivors may even feel responsible for the death.

**Mourning A Loved One**

It is not easy to cope after a loved one dies. You will mourn and grieve. Mourning is the natural process you go
through to accept a major loss. Mourning may include religious traditions honoring the dead or gathering with friends and family to share your loss. Mourning is personal and may last months or years.

**Dealing with Grief:** It takes time to fully absorb the impact of a major loss. People may not stop missing the deceased, but the pain eases after time and allows going on with their life. Coping with death is vital to the mental health of persons affected. It is only natural to experience grief when a loved one dies. The best thing is to allow oneself to grieve. There are many ways to cope effectively with the pain like sharing feelings with close relatives and friends, joining support groups with others who are experiencing similar losses, taking conscious care of one’s health needs, avoiding danger of alcohol or drug dependence, attending spiritual discourses, giving time to adjust to grief with patience and lastly seeking professional help like counseling.

**Helping Others Grieve:** People can help their significant others in the grieving process by sharing their sorrows with patience, helping them in their day-to-day functioning and trying to build normalcy gradually, but being cautious of not offering false comforts. It is always better to encourage people to take professional help if someone is experiencing too much pain to cope alone.

**Helping Children Grieve:** There may be differences between children and adults in the coping style and patterns and time taken to cope. A parent’s death can be particularly difficult for small children, affecting their sense of security or survival. Many times, they are confused about the changes they observe around them, particularly if adults try to protect them from the truth or from their surviving parent’s display of grief. Limited understanding and an inability to express feelings put very young children
at a special disadvantage. Young children may revert to earlier behaviors (such as bed-wetting), ask questions about the deceased, show aversive behaviours or may become too submissive or stubborn. Coping with children’s grief puts added strain on a bereaved parent. However, angry outbursts or criticism to avoid children’s questions about the deceased parent only deepen their anxiety and delays recovery. Many times, children may hold themselves responsible for the mishap. Therefore, talking honestly with children, in terms that they can understand, fastens the process of recovery. It is important to help them work through their feelings and remember that they are looking to adults for suitable behaviour.

**Conclusion**

In this Chapter some of the problems and issues have been discussed having capacity to disrupt well-being and normal functioning of the families in the present world. Families are not idealistic institutions that are considered safe haven for its members. There can be inherent problems in the family system, norms, socialization practices that may lead to problems and conflicts. One such problem discussed in the unit was that of marital discord. Focus was given on the conceptual framework of mental processes that set the path apart between the couples and they start seeing no future of their relationship. Couples in distress selectively recast marital history with attention only on negative interactions. Gender differences in coping style are also discussed that often guide the perception reinforcing negativity and discontent in the relationship. Impact of divorce and separation on the psychological, social and even physical levels on marital partners as well as children was discussed.

Abuse and violence in the family life has traditionally and historically been observed. Gender and violence are highly
contemporary problems in family system 413

correlated. theoretical interpretations of various dimensions of domestic violence have been delineated. briefly programmes for prevention of domestic violence were mentioned.

ageing has been a universal and natural phenomenon of human life cycle. in the current scenario, elderly are emerging as a vulnerable group. the care and support of elderly is a cause of concern for most families and it puts physical, psychological and financial pressure for most of the economically stressed families. similarly, illness and disability among any of the family members affects the functioning and well-being of the family.

coping with death of loved one has been a crisis event for most of the people. though bereavement is natural, it may hamper physical, mental health and social well-being of the survivors. shock, denial, loss of hope, anxiety, depression and the like are associated with feeling of grief. age, sex, relation, level of intimacy, social roles played by the deceased, all play an important role in denoting the intensity of bereavement experienced by family members, individually and collectively.

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Introduction

Adolescents comprise 20% of the global population, 85% of them live in developing countries. Further, 21% (210 million) of India’s population is in the age group of 10-19 years, that is, adolescents. Let us understand some of the peculiar characteristics of this phase of life before looking at the areas of concern vis-à-vis adolescents and youth.

The term adolescence is derived from the Latin word ‘adolescre’, which means to grow to maturity. In this sense, adolescence is a process rather than a period, a process of achieving the required growth at the physical and mental level needed for participating as an adult member in the society. The term “adolescence” signifies a period during which a growing person makes the transition from childhood to adulthood. Though, it is not linked to any precise span of years, adolescence is considered to begin roughly when children start showing signs of puberty and it continues until they are physically (attaining maximum growth in height and body functioning), mentally (approximately reaching their full intellectual growth as measured by intelligence tests) and sexually (attaining growth and development of primary and secondary sexual attributions) mature. This period roughly covers the years from about the age of ten to nineteen.

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Adolescence is a period when significant and rapid changes occur in all aspects of personality. These developments are considered biologically driven, as a result of maturation of certain organs, influencing the various facets of personality like cognition, intelligence, social interaction and behaviour patterns. Interestingly, many researchers and development psychologists regard the period of adolescence as ‘a new birth’, which more often than not is erratic, unpredictable and stressful.

Apparently, the phase of adolescence pose an array of stressors and stains on adolescents and their families. Dealing with adolescent children may be a cause of concern for the family members especially parents. Thus, adolescence is a crucial period for the individual and the family for several reasons, some of which may be delineated.

Adolescence is considered one of the most vulnerable stages of life due to high degree of emotional turbulence. Children in this phase become highly susceptible to be lured away. Desire to be independent is so provoking that many of them ‘enjoy’ doing whatever they have been forbidden to do. Peer approval is more potent variable to define self-image, rather than family’s perception. Emotions related to revolt and rebellion surcharged easily. With such behavioural dispositions, children in adolescent and young phase are highly vulnerable to drug abuse, alcoholism, pre-marital sex, HIV and other such infections.

Parenting adolescent children is not an easy task and may be very stressful for parents. They may first have to bring necessary change in their perception and assumption about transition of their offspring from childhood to adulthood. If deviant and high-risk behaviours of adolescent children are not handled with great maturity and patience, situations may become critical and disastrous.
In this Chapter, we would be discussing some of the major issues concerning adolescent children and youth like drug and alcohol abuse among them, their anti-social, high-risk and deviant behaviour, common psychological disorders, youth and sex related issues and the challenges to the parents in the contemporary society.

**Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

One of the most crucial and potentially harmful problems that encounter today’s youth and adolescents is that of substance abuse. Adolescent children indulging in drug or alcohol abuse is one of the worst nightmares of most parents whose ward are in this vulnerable age group. Hence, drugs and alcohol usage by adolescent and young family members bring serious stressors on families.

There is no need to reiterate harmful effects of substance abuse. Health cost of drug abuse is observed in lowered immunity to infections and even malnutrition that may contribute to a variety of health problems. Direct impact is seen on Central Nervous System that even lead to short term memory impairment. In fact, most of the deaths of adolescents and young adults from accidents, injuries are often related to substance abuse. Combining driving with drinking has lethal impact on young adults and adolescents.

Further, there are long-term effects of substance abuse on the psyche of people. Higher drug use is associated with low social and intellectual skills such as poor problem solving and impaired social relationships. Depression, hostility and anxiety are among the common outcomes of long-term substance abuse. Socially, researches bring out that there is substantial increase in work and school related difficulties among the persons involved in drug use.
One major area of concern for social researchers has been the impact of family life on the susceptibility of adolescents and youth to get involved in substance abuse. It is often held that dysfunctional family life increase chances of drug addiction among children. Steinglass, Bennett, Wolin and Reiss (1987) bring out that the disruption of the functional properties of the family systems (e.g., family rituals, problem solving strategies) would in turn provide an environment conducive to greater drug use and abuse by members of subsequent generations. Another argument is that drug use in a family increases all kinds of abuses — especially sexual and physical abuse, which, consequently may trigger drug abuse among adolescents.

Family history of drug abuse is one of the most potent factors in adolescent drug abuse. Research findings show that sibling or parental drug use have direct bearing on increasing the probability of substance abuse among adolescents. When parents or other elders use drugs such as cigarette and alcohol, it indicates to children that those behaviours are allowed, if not actually expected, in their family.

Another area, in the research of family life and drug abuse, is the impact of latter on the family's functioning and well-being. High drug use in families, especially by parents, disrupts functions like providing care and support to children, positive parenting, problem solving, decision-making, which, in turn, provides a conducive environment for drug use and abuse by children. Undoubtedly, parental drug abuse diminishes their ability to exert effective monitoring and supervision. Such parenting allows children to mingle with peers who are frequently involved in drug abuse. Parental drug abuse poses poor and faulty role modeling for children. It blocks effective parent-child communication and changes interpersonal trust, faith, love and respect. It, thus, may lead to all kinds of child abuse — physical, verbal and even sexual.
Let us look at the impact of drug use on the family processes and family climate in some more detail. Social scientists on family studies have categorized parenting into two broad dimensions: (a) support and (b) control and one facilitating dimension — communication. The **support dimension** refers to positive, affective experiences associated with relationships in the family such as acceptance, encouragement, security and love. High family support, that is, affection, companionship, sustained contacts have been found to be a strong factor in preventing deviant behaviours among children and adolescents like that of drug abuse. If parents are encouraging, supportive, shower affection and care, share activities, ideas and feelings with children, especially those in the adolescent age group, chances are much higher that children would abstain themselves from substance abuse. On the other hand, if there is lack of perceived closeness, trust and help, affection and involvement, availability and shared activities in parent-child relationship, adolescents more frequently become susceptible to drug abuse and alcoholism. Studies have clearly shown that parental rejection, conflicts and manipulative relationship are all related to the earlier onset of drug experimentation and further use of illicit substances.

Next, the **control dimension** depicts the extent to which children’s behaviour is or is not restricted by the caregiver(s), ranging from establishing rules and discipline to varieties of physical coercion (hitting, yelling, etc.). It is a crucial variable in parenting adolescent children. Lack of consistent behavioural control like careful supervision and monitoring has repeatedly been associated with early experimentation with drugs, involvement with drug using peers and progression towards the use of harder drugs. Studies further show that parental permissiveness, even when combined with closeness, is a powerful predictor of adolescent immaturity and peer susceptibility, especially
in early and mid adolescence. Thus, we may infer that authoritative parenting that is characterized by control plus closeness is best suited for adolescents and more frequently helps them abstaining from risky behaviours like drug abuse. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting, rigid rule practices, cruel harsh discipline, parent-child over-involvement were extreme types of psychological control and were consistently found to be associated with social withdrawal, lack of social competence and drug abuse among adolescents.

**Communication** in the families of drug abusers is more often, dysfunctional and negative, loaded with misperceptions. Studies show that communication in these families is blocked either by the use of drugs or by feeling of just not being understood. Contrarily, good communication pattern between parent-child is reflective of strong bond and has the potential to deal effectively with many challenges like susceptibility to drug abuse. Drug addiction also strains family’s interaction with the outside social world. More often than not, families of drug addicts isolate themselves from the social environment.

Thus, we may conclude that problem of drug addiction among adolescents is of national concern. Adolescents and youth are the biggest potential of energy, conviction, hard work, intelligence and creativity to play a vital role in the progress and development of any nation, state, society or family. Drug addiction among adolescents and youth is one of the strongest hurdles that may pose brakes in the national development by destroying the most precious human resource of any country. Studies have shown that family environment, and particularly, parent-child relationship is one of the key factors that reduce or enhance vulnerability of adolescents and youth towards drug addiction. Drug adhering parents prove to be a bad role model for their children. Communication, level of parental
control, their support and interaction all are compelling variables that influence degree of proneness towards substance abuse among adolescents and youth.

**Delinquent Behaviour**

A recent case (December, 2007) of a school boy who shot dead his schoolmate has pressed the panic button about today’s adolescent children’s mental health. Among all the problem areas related to adolescents, anti-social behaviour arouses the deepest social concern. This is because such activities put in question the safety and security of other people and their property. Children who come in conflict with law are termed as delinquents. Consequences of these delinquent behaviours on the children, their families as well as the community are more often disastrous. In the eyes of public, the juvenile delinquents are stigmatized and labeled, which goes a long way in their life affecting a decent and ‘normal’ living. Social environment has hardly been conducive enough to help restoration and rehabilitation of delinquent children in a true sense.

Why children enter into delinquent behaviour? Is it due to unfulfilled needs, associated frustrations and poor coping mechanisms learnt from the family? Over the past few decades, researchers have tried to explore the impact of family life on susceptibility of adolescents to indulge into delinquent and high-risk behaviour. Findings have brought out that early aggressive behaviours, such as temper tantrums beyond a normal limit and unacceptable behaviours at the school, if not handled appropriately, have been identified as significant predictors of later delinquent behaviour. This is truer in the case of boys than girls. As social work professionals, your objective should be to look at the causative factors (social learning, faulty parenting, peer pressure and the like) rather than the onset and frequency of delinquent behaviour.
Let us specifically look at some of the salient characteristics of family functioning and patterns, norms and values that play vital role in adding to vulnerability of children showing delinquent behaviour. Researches have shown that in families where one parent is punitive and the other is overly involved, children get utterly confused about the desirable behaviour expected of them and they become highly prone to high-risk behaviour including delinquency. Added to this, parents who show ‘coldness’ or are less expressive in showing their emotions give signals of unconcerned and disengaged attitude towards children, their ward more often show high-risk behaviour. We had studied in earlier units also, in the Ecological Model of Family Assessment, that families with balanced levels of cohesion and adaptability have better inter-personal relationships in between various dyads than families with disengaged or enmeshed relations with rigid or chaotic patterns of adaptability. As a logical corollary, adolescents in former type of ‘healthy’ families have fewer chances of showing delinquency than their counterparts coming from latter or ‘unhealthy’ type of families.

Next, parental control is also very vital factor in influencing high-risk behaviours among adolescents as we have seen in the previous section. In this context, techniques of parenting style are quite crucial. Parents, who tend to make frequent use of authoritarian or laissez-faire disciplining styles, often have troubled adolescents whereas parents of non-high risk adolescents are more likely to use authoritative or democratic styles. Quite interestingly, both extremes — authoritarian or rigid disciplining style as well as laissez-faire disciplining styles have similar outcome — increased chances of delinquency among adolescents. Parents who adopt laissez-faire disciplining style remove almost all control and make their children free of any kind of monitoring and supervision on
their behaviours. Consequently, children take it as indifference on the part of their parents and exhibit hostile and apathetic behaviours. Studies have convincingly shown that laissez-faire parenting or lack of structure and monitoring as well as low responsiveness are likely to result in impulsiveness, delinquent behaviour, drugs and alcohol abuse and experimentation with sex at an early age among adolescents. Adolescents who consider their parents as neglectful are consistently compromised in areas of competence, self-perception, mis-behaviour and tend to be psychologically distressed.

Further, adolescents belonging to neglected homes (where parents may be overdrawn in their marital discord and associated stress or over-burdened to make both ends meet or involved in any other stressful situation that may amount neglect, avoidance in parenting children) are more frequently disengaged from school, have higher involvement in drug and alcohol use and in delinquent behaviours.

**Family environment** is another important factor that influences high-risk behaviour among adolescents. The environment of the family is the direct outcome of the dynamics in the family. **Family dynamics** influences the quality of relationship between adolescents and parents and also appears to affect the extent to which adolescents engage in high-risk behaviour. Studies have shown that lack of happiness in the parental home and feelings of social and emotional isolation have been found to be associated with greater incidence of multiple sex partners among adolescents. Adolescents may engage in deviant or delinquent behaviour in order to show hostility towards their parents. Also, seeing parents in pain may give them sadistic pleasure. For example, adolescent girls involving in premarital sex and becoming pregnant may be an attempt on their part to seek attention of ‘uninvolved and
uncaring’ parents, see them tormented or even to establish an identity in an enmeshed family. Inadequate bonding between parents and child appears to be strong predictor of high-risk behaviours among adolescents.

Thus, we may conclude that faulty parenting and disciplining styles, constrained family dynamics and similar family processes have intense impact on the vulnerability of adolescents to indulge in delinquent or deviant behaviours. However, other socializing agents like peers, school, and community (in the order) influence the risk-behaviour among adolescents. Though children learn values, perception as well as coping style mainly from the primary agent of socialization, that is, family, role of peers cannot be ruled out. It has been a well-established fact that during adolescence peer acceptance becomes stronger component in the identity construction than parental acceptance/love/affection. Pressure of peers is so great that many adolescents are reported to have committed suicide after getting lowest marks among the friend circle, despite least parental expectations/scolding on this account.

If, during adolescence, child happens to be in the company of deviant/delinquent peers, chances are higher that he (more applicable in the case of boys) also shows unacceptable social behaviour. Idealism and irrationality, emotional outbursts and gullibility are characteristics of adolescence. This makes the period very precarious due to these emotions. According to most adolescents, idealistically, friendship is one of the greatest virtues: ‘Friendship’ needs to be maintained at all costs, ignoring and overlooking all vices of their peers. Added to this, gaining peer praise and acceptance, proving his/her point in the group becomes a disproportionately big issue for adolescents. In the next section, we would be studying this aspect at length. When trust and value of ‘peer
intelligence and ideology’ becomes overtly large, it creates problems, as role of parents becomes all the more difficult and complex to protect child indulging into high-risk.

**Prominent Psychosocial Problems**

Adolescents may suffer from a lot of psychosocial problems, outcomes of which are reflected in high-risk behaviours like drug addiction, teen aggression, violence, suicide and the like. It may be noted that reasons, causes of psychosocial problems discussed in this unit are quite overlapping. Apart from drug addiction and delinquent behaviours a few prominent concerns are mentioned below:

**Bullying** is a dark truth of adolescent life. According to an estimate, 30% of adolescents in the country might be caught up in bullying in schools either as a bully or a target of bullying or both. Bullying is found more common among boys than girls. Adolescent males are more likely to terrorize others and be the targets of browbeat. Adolescent boys target both sexes, while girls generally terrorize other girls, using more slight and indirect forms of violent behavior than boys.

Bullying affects adolescents in many ways. Bullying make adolescents feel tense, worried, and terrified. It can severely influence attendance records of the adolescents as many of them may keep themselves away from school to avoid uncomfortable situations. If bullying situations continue for long time, it starts affecting the self-concept, self-respect of the bullied child and may shake his/her confidence. Consequently, child may show anxiety, depression, and withdrawal symptoms and may opt for social segregation. Self-esteem is blown badly which may be reflected in poor academic performance. In severe cases, bullying can be overwhelming for adolescents and they may start thinking of taking revenge. In the moments of rage and discontent,
bullied adolescents may feel to take extreme steps like carrying arms for protection or paying back brutally. Teens, in nervousness, even think about committing suicide. Studies have shown that bad experiences of bullying may have continued negative consequences in adulthood too — even long after the bullying has stopped, adults who were terrorized as teens have more frequently shown higher levels of depression and inferiority complex, poor sense of worth than their fellow beings.

**Teen Aggression** or violence among adolescents is fast emerging as a cause of concern for parents, teachers and even for society. Aggression among teens is reflected in many forms. School shootings are an extreme form of aggression among teenagers. Other forms of teen violence are: unhealthy ragging, bullying, fighting, gang rivalry, including cruelty to animals and uncontrollable outbursts of anger or tantrums at home. Suicide bombing and suicides among youngsters have a high incidence. Rape and molestation are other expressions of violent behaviour. Aggression can manifest through arson, destruction of property and any kind of vandalism.

**Causes:** Social psychology states that violence is a learned behaviour. There are no born criminals. Children observe violence in people around them and imitate accordingly. Children observing or experiencing **domestic violence** are more likely to take up and justify violent behaviour in their adolescence or youth. Even **corporal punishment** qualifies as physical abuse and studies have shown that it is counter-productive. **Subjection to physical or sexual abuse** at home, school or in their social environment may trigger teen violence. **Violence in the media** provides enough stimuli and courage to teen aggression. They may also assimilate hostile ideas through the media. Destructive lyrics in rap and rock songs, movies showing extreme violence, assassination games, books with violent content,
and similar others are filling the young minds with ideas and justifications of violence. These days, violent computer and video games have become immensely popular among youngsters. Further, drug abuse, smoking, alcoholism all these foster violent behaviour among adolescents, as proved by many research studies. Finally, socio-economic factors like poverty, severe deprivation, unstable family, single parent family, unemployment, lack of family support and the like may also contribute in inciting teenage aggression.

Suicide is one of the most common causes of death among young people. Latest worldwide trends have shown that, on an average, annual rates of suicide per 1 lakh persons are 12.0 for females and 14.2 for males among 15-24 years age group. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents. In most countries, males outnumber females in youth suicide statistics and attempted suicides are far more than actual completed ones. An epidemiological study has shown the ratio of completed suicides and attempted ones is 1:23, with higher number of teen females attempting suicide than their male counterparts.

Shockingly, statistics show that suicide rate among adolescents and youth has increased by more than 300 times in the last three decades. The reasons for this alarming rate may be attributed to increased incidence of childhood depression, increasing stress arousing stimuli in the social environment and decreasing role of family to provide comfort, support, security and hope to distressed adolescents. Faced with feelings of frustration, helplessness, and hopelessness and lacking coping mechanisms, adolescents can become overwhelmed and turn to escapist measures such as drugs, withdrawal, and ultimately suicide. Further, adolescence is a time when ordinary levels of stress are heightened by physical,
psychological, emotional and social changes accentuating duality and conflict of identities and roles of childhood or adulthood, both from the side of society as well as adolescents. The achievement-oriented, highly competitive society puts pressure on the teens to succeed, often forcing them to set unrealistically high personal expectations. There is increased pressure to stay in school, where success is narrowly defined and difficult to achieve. In a society, which emphasizes immediate rewards, adolescents are not taught to be tolerant of frustration and they may resort to hard steps like ending their life.

Contrary to popular belief, suicide, among adolescents, is in general not an impulsive act but the result of many intermingling factors. Often there is a previous history of problems (childhood, family related), which is compounded with problems associated with adolescence. Then, a precipitating event, may be a death or end of a meaningful relationship, triggers the suicide attempt. Many factors, as indicated below, add to the susceptibility of suicide among adolescents and youth.

**Personal characteristics** like history of psychopathology triggers suicide among adolescents. Studies have shown that 90% of youth suicides and around 60% of younger adolescent suicide victims have had at least one major psychiatric disorder, most commonly, depressive disorders. Further, a history of previous suicide attempts is one of the strongest predictors of completed suicide, especially in boys. One quarter to one third of teen suicide victims have made previous suicide attempts. **Cognitive and personality factors** like hopelessness, poor interpersonal problem solving ability and aggressive impulsive behaviour have been linked with suicidal tendencies. Certain **biological factors** like abnormalities in the function of serotonin, a neurotransmitter, have been associated with suicidal behaviour.
Family characteristics like Family history of suicidal behaviour are quite significant. Studies show that teens who kill themselves have often had a close family member who attempted or committed suicide. Also high rates of parental psychopathology, particularly depression and substance abuse, have been found to be associated with suicidal behaviour among adolescents. Moreover, family cohesion has been reported to be a protective factor for suicidal behaviour among adolescents.

Further, stressful life events such as interpersonal losses and failures in certain goals in life are associated with suicides among teens. Recent trends bring out that academic pressures, conflicts in love relations, poor physical health, familial problems, victimization in domestic violence, childhood depression, bullying, sexual problems are some of the reasons that instigate an adolescent to commit suicide.

Though quite overlapping, certain socioeconomic and contextual factors like difficulties in school, dropping out of high school and not being able to attend college pose significant risks for completed suicide. Added to this, contagion or imitation, that is, recent reading about, sight or knowledge about suicide also trigger suicidal attempts among adolescents. For instance, students’ movement against reservations on basis of Mandal Commission (period: 1990-91) instigated many teens to commit suicide after getting information about suicides by others in the student community.

Adolescents And Sex Related Issues

Adolescence is a process denoted by sexual maturation. It is quite a complex situation for adolescents of becoming sexually active adult with required changes in the sexual organs as well as nearly full growth of body and brain. There can be various stressors and issues of concern
related to sexuality and sexual growth of adolescents. A few important ones may be delineated below:

Biologically, sexual maturation is a totally new experience, which changes the societal expectations towards adolescents. Adjusting to new body image may be quite distinctive experience for teens. There may be strong desire to explore sexual identity and experiment. It is quite unfortunate that in our society, talking about sex related issues is considered a taboo. The urge to know about sexual issues affecting them is often satisfied by the peer groups, especially elder ones who themselves are hardly aware of adequate knowledge. According to many studies, peers and elder friends are the most popular source of information on sex related issues followed by television, films and video parlor shows. A sizable proportion of adolescents also seek information from roadside book vendors. In these cases, streets become libraries of knowledge of sex and some times even laboratories. Clandestine approach about sexual issues does enough damage to the health and psyche of teens, especially when HIV/AIDS and related infects have shaken the country. Growing rate of HIV infection, adolescent pregnancies and abortions, pre-marital sex among teens, and similar other indicators depict the harmful effect of keeping sexual issues under the carpet and letting our young children resort to unreliable sources of information.

Being an early or late mature places adolescents in a position of being ‘socially deviant’ with advantages and disadvantages. Timing of onset of puberty influences even socio-emotional well-being among adolescents. Early maturing girls experience undue self-consciousness about breast development, stress and introversion, embarrassment and sexual frustration. In contrast early maturing boys tend to be more assertive, popular and accepted more readily by adults.
Further, media also has contributed to the growing awareness of sexuality. Media offers an unlimited source of knowledge to the young generation. Even before they get the basic sex education from their parents or elder ones, they must have grasped the glimpses of sexual life from the media. The reports on rape, sexual abuse, porn movies or any other sexual issue on cable, internets fill the young minds with sexual knowledge, largely inadequate. Media in print are often lenient in showing sexual images and narrate explicit sexual content even while dealing with sexual violence against women. Television influences adolescents through providing sexual portrayals, massages in its programmes, thereby, helping them create their own sexual attitudes, values, and beliefs. The influence of web media has revolutionarily increased in the present world. Many sites provide exclusive sexual content for their readers, accessing which is really a child’s play. Easy access to porn sites often fills the minds of adolescents with wrong notions, which, is a matter of serious concern for us. It is quite unfortunate that media makes minimum mention of safe sex and related issues.

There is no way to put away adolescents from the influence of media. They may be backed off from their peer group if they are not aware of contemporary events. However, reducing the negative impact of media in this regard should form the focus of intervention for all stakeholders concerned with the well-being of children, adolescents and youth. Involving media to project sexual issues in the right manner, providing adequate and relevant knowledge to our teens is the need of the day. Media can pay pro-active role by showing programmes related to life-skill education, STD, HIV and AIDS, family planning, etc., suitting the requirements of adolescents. There is no evidence that the increased sexual knowledge through media has encouraged the modern generation to have sex at an early stage. However, media remains to play a key role in all the upcoming sexual issues.
Ignorance and half-cooked information is doing a lot of damage, physically and mentally, of many adolescent and young people. Many studies done on sexual behaviour of adolescents bring out that a huge majority of teens receive information from their peers and elder friends. Talking about sex and related issues is, more often than not, avoided in discussions with parents and teachers. Sex is a stigmatized word in most families and children are denied access to any sources of information (television, books, etc.,) under parental control, at least when both are around.

Studies show that among adolescent males, nocturnal emissions and masturbation were the major health concerns. Though chances of ‘truthful’ answers, during interviews were limited, on an average, 10% adolescents admitted that they were sexually active. Sexual activity and sexuality related misconceptions among adolescents may be the ‘tip of the ice–berg’. Though, in a clandestine way, to check or prove their ‘manhood’ in their peer group, many adolescent boys visit sex workers. This behaviour makes them vulnerable to STD and HIV infections. ‘Condom usage reduced sexual pleasure’ — majority of adolescents and youth believe in this myth and show inconsistent condom usage. Other than commercial sex workers, neighborhood girls, lovers, schoolmates are reportedly, the sexual partners of male adolescents and youth. Considering neighborhood girls as ‘not kharab’ (bad), they confine condom usage to sex workers, and that too is quite inconsistent. Also many adolescent boys reportedly practice homosexuality and, often, young boys are at early age forced into this. Later these ‘victims’ become perpetrators and sexually abuse other young boys.

Next, studies bring out that masturbation and nocturnal emissions are common among adolescents but related myths and misconceptions are high. Some of the widespread opinions are: masturbation is not a healthy
practice as it causes weakness in the body, makes one’s body weak because of which one may not be able to perform the sex act successfully in future. Some believe that the growth of the penis would become stunted while others maintain that the penis would grow excessively large. Some opine that masturbation would make the penis ‘diseased’. Similarly, nocturnal emissions or wet dreams or *swāpna dosh* are experienced widely but most of them do not confide about the same.

Further, more particularly in the case of girls, with child marriage or early marriage on rise and talking about sex being taboo, sexual relations, initially are unplanned and sometimes forced for adolescent and young girls, before they could acquire needed knowledge about sex related issues. Patriarchal social structure expects girls to be unconcerned, ignorant, uninformed and disinterested in sex related issues. Girls showing knowledge or interest are considered ‘bad’. However, this does not rule out possibilities of pre-marital sex, teen-age pregnancies, abortions and children born out of wedlock. Rather, many studies have shown that teen-age sex is on rise and so are the problems associated with it. The worst impact of this problem is reflected in the fact that around 4 million people in India are HIV positive and majority of them are in the young age group. Along with lack of proper knowledge about spread of HIV, frequent indulgence in risk behaviour becomes doubly dangerous. The social, economic and psychological costs of HIV infection are astonishingly large.

The above discussion brings out that our adolescents and youth lack proper and adequate information about sex related issues and as a result do not opt safer sex practices, which can be disastrous for our country if timely intervention is not put in place. There is an urgent need for educational interventions. Correct scientific information should be disseminated to adolescents both in formal and
informal settings so that they do not pick up sexual myths and misconceptions from their peers.

**Recommended Response**

Newspapers and news channels regularly bring out incidences of adolescent aggression, delinquencies, and involvement in drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual violence, suicides, terrorism and other anti-social activities. This definitely shivers spinal cord of most cognizant and conscious citizens of India. The unlimited energy in the form of youth that could have been utilized to add to the progress, development and glory of the nation, is being used in destruction and devastation. What role can we play to resolve adolescent problems, prevent negative behaviours and mishaps and diverting energy of adolescents and youth to constructive activities? In this section, an attempt has been made to look into the prevention and management of problems related to adolescents.

Intervention strategy may primarily be implemented within three domains – family, school and community (neighborhood). Various actors playing significant roles in the intervention may be: parents, peers, teachers, media (print, electronic, web), state, NGOs, educationists, social planners, etc.

**School based Programme:** It may include curricula components to teach students about vulnerabilities of adolescents at the physical, sexual, emotional and social levels. The contents should include: hormonal changes and their impact on the body and mind, faulty coping styles that may trigger drug abuse, smoking, alcohol, teen aggression, violence, sex related problems, suicide, homicide and other disastrous consequences and the like. There should be holistic coverage of all the relevant issues that commonly adolescents come across.
The goals of school based programme are to increase awareness, promote identification of students at high risk, provide knowledge about the behavioral characteristics that may put teens at risk for violence, drug addiction, suicide, etc. and impart information to students, teachers and parents on the availability of mental health resources and enhance positive coping abilities of teenagers.

School social workers or school counselors may take the lead of such programme and design specific interventions at the preventive, ameliorative, rehabilitative and promotive levels.

Parents, teachers, peers, school social workers should be encouraged to look for **warning signs** of high-risk behaviours like adolescent talking about death and dying, signs of depression, taking excessive risks, increased drug use, verbalizing suicide threats, giving away of prized personal possessions, collection and discussion of information on suicide methods, expression of hopelessness, helplessness, and anger at oneself or the world, the scratching or marking of the body, or other self-destructive acts, acute personality changes, unusual withdrawal, aggressiveness, or moodiness, sudden dramatic decline or improvement in academic performance, chronic truancy or tardiness, or running away, physical symptoms such as eating disturbances, sleeplessness or excessive sleeping, chronic headaches or stomachaches, menstrual irregularities, apathetic appearance, sadness, anxiety or ‘empty’ mood, loss of pleasure/interest in social and sports activities, changes in weight or appetite and similar other stimuli.

Presence of a few to many of the signs mentioned above in the behaviour of the adolescent child may alarm the significant others of probable high risk activity.

In case, one finds presence of some of these warning signs,
then adolescent should not be left in isolation for long. Dealing with low self-esteem in an effective way is a must. For this, significant others should: listen actively, teach problem-solving skills, encourage positive thinking, help the student write a list of his or her good qualities, give the student opportunities for success, give as much praise as possible, help the student set up a step-by-step plan to achieve his goals, talk to the family so that they can understand how the student is feeling. Such situations call for intensive case work including counseling not only with the affected child/adolescent but also with parents, peers and other significant persons.

**Role of school social workers:** They can act as liaison between the various stakeholders — parents and school, teachers and mental health professionals and between high-risk teens, peers and parents. They can also alert school officials to the seriousness of the issue, offer stress management workshops to teens, train peer counselors, establish support groups for teens, train teachers, parents in detecting warning signs, develop network with outside school services like NGOs, media, help-line, etc. and take up case work with students having problems.

**Role of teachers:** They play a significant role in prevention, because they spend a good amount of time, share special bond, are traditionally an authority figure and role model for the students. In parent-teacher meetings, they should discuss warning signs, if any, with parents about their ward and can form referral networks with mental health professionals. They can increase student awareness by introducing the topic in their classes. They should make every effort to develop healthy attitude and vision among students, channelizing their energies into creative pursuits.

**Role of peers:** Peers are perhaps the most important group as their attitude and perception have maximum weight
age for the high-risk adolescent. According to one study, 93% of the students reported that they would turn to a friend before a teacher, parent or spiritual guide in a time of crisis. Peers can form student support group and, once equipped with relevant knowledge and skills, can train others to be peer counselors. Not keeping the secret that suicidal/delinquent friend has confided and encouraging him/her to seek professional help, if required, would be the expected role of peers in pre-crisis management.

**Role of parents:** Parents need to be as open and as attentive as possible to their adolescent children’s difficulties. Effective parent-child communication, optimum disciplining are potent factors to solve almost all the problems of adolescents, but it requires years to build such healthy relationships between parents and children. Sometimes teens hide their problems, not wanting to burden the people they love. It is extremely important to assure teens that they can share their troubles, and gain support in the process. Parents should be aware of outside agencies for help and must not hesitate to seek professional help to solve the problem their adolescent child is facing. Added to this, it is extremely important for parents not to keep any guns or similar weapons at home. If there is dire need, then, in all cases, it should be beyond the reach of children as studies have shown that adolescents are five times more likely to commit suicide if they have guns or arms at home.

**Other Services:** Hotlines, NGOs, Adolescent clubs, self-help groups and other support services are also very important in mitigating crisis. Awareness regarding availability of services should be advertised and popularized properly. School authorities should be strict to take disciplinary action if ragging, bullying and such other harmful activities are found to subsist within students’ groups.
Role of State: Restricting access to drugs, alcohol, poison, guns and similar weapons and other lethal means is the must for the State. Ensuring proper implementation of Juvenile Justice Act with adequate systems of rehabilitation in place is the constitutional and moral responsibility of the government.

Role of media: Media is playing a powerful role in shaping the personality of adolescents, the only problem is with the focus. Media has tremendous potential to reach out to remotest of areas in a convincing manner. Encouraging media to take up positive role in providing the relevant information to the adolescents is the need of the hour.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, we discussed how adolescence, as a developmental phase, is crucial for the children, family and community. Adolescence is characterized by immense energy, vigor and courage that, if not channel zed in the right direction, may lead to children indulging in drug addiction, alcoholism, smoking, delinquency, sexual assault, terrorism, vandalism, etc.

Family is the primary institutions that play most important role in shaping the attitude, coping style, maturity and other personality domains of children. Family dynamics, parental style of disciplining, inter-personal relationship, and communication patterns determine, to a large extent, whether the child would successfully overcome ‘adolescence vagaries’ or problems related to adolescence. The next important aspect that influences the personality of adolescents is their peer group. Media is also playing a huge role in building the attitudes, values, coping style of adolescents, which, more often is reflected in a negative manner.
Adolescence is a period of sexual maturation. Early matures as well as late matures have their distinctive pros and cons. There are lot of myths and misconceptions among adolescents and youth related to sexual issues. However, pre-marital sex, teen-pregnancies, spread of STDs and HIV are increasing at substantial proportions affecting the health and even life of adolescents.

It is the responsibility of family, peers, community, school, civil society organizations and the state to develop a well equipped system of intervention at the preventive and management level to reduce the risk of adolescent and youth tribulations like suicide, homicide, violence, drug addiction, rape, molestation, sexual assault, etc.

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Basic Social Science Concepts

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Preface

The students of social work must have knowledge of the basic concepts pertaining to social sciences because social work is an interdisciplinary subject. The discipline of social work has highly borrowed knowledge and information from disciplines like Sociology, Psychology and other behavioural sciences. In this volume we have presented seventeen chapters which will provide basic information and knowledge on the basic social science concepts for social workers.

The chapter on ‘social work and other disciplines’ deals with evolution of social work as an academic discipline and its relation to other disciplines such as a Sociology, Psychology, Medicine, Psychiatry, History, Public Administration, Law, Philosophy and Economics. The description of ‘Society and Culture’ will provide you conceptual clarity about society, socialization, culture and social work intervention at individual, group and community level as well in the society. Chapter three is on ‘Indian Society: Composition, Classification and Stratification’. This chapter introduces you to the people of India and some basic facts about social stratification and social work intervention in a pluralistic society. The next chapter ‘Social groups, social institutions and social control’ describes meaning, types, functions of social groups, social institutions, social control and social work intervention.

‘Social changes: meaning, characteristics and factors’ is another chapter which will familiarize you with the meaning, characteristics, sources, factors and theories of social change and the role of social worker.

The chapter on “Psychological foundation for social work practice” describes the definition, branches and relevance of studying psychology for social work practice. This
The chapter also explains the nature of personality, factors contributing to the development of the personality and discusses the theories in personality development. The discussion on the “Concepts of social psychology for social work practice” further explores the key concepts of social psychology including groups and group processes, leadership role functions and theories, introduction to social attitudes and prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes. The chapter on 'Social learning and motivation' will introduce you to the definition process and classical as well as contemporary theories of social learning. It also covers concepts, process and types of memory that makes learning relevant. Motivation is another dynamic concept illustrated in this chapter. Relevant theories of motivation, conflict motivation and using motivation in the field practice have been discussed in the chapter at length.

‘Defense mechanisms and stress’ describes the relevance of defense mechanisms in our day to day life, their typology and mental processes associated with it. It also gives you comprehensive understanding of stress, positive and negative ways of coping and stress management. “Stages of human growth and development” is important as it gives proper understanding to the students of social work about the changes that happen to a human being at various time intervals, what are the reasons for them to occur, and how they further affect behaviours. In the end, the chapter provides knowledge on theories of human development under which Freud’s psychosexual stages and Erikson’s psychosocial conflict theory throw light on behaviour and personality of individuals in different stages of human growth and development. The chapter on the ‘Biological aspects of the stages of human growth and development’ orients about physical, cognitive and psychological development in every stage of the human life. The various stages covered are prenatal stage, babyhood stage, early childhood stage, middle childhood stage, adolescence stage, young adulthood stage, middle adulthood stage and
late adulthood stage. The discussion on the ‘Concept of family and marriage’ has explained the meaning and functions of family, purpose of marriage, and finally the implications for social work professionals while working with the institution of marriage and family. The chapter on ‘understanding man and women’ describes the physical differences, its implications in a man and a woman, the psychological and emotional differences, social structure and gender orientation. The chapter ends with discussion on implications of gender discrimination, meaning of sexual minority and scope of social work as well as role of professional social workers while dealing with such groups.

Human beings pass through various stages of life cycle from childhood to adulthood and to old age. Similarly families also pass through various stages. The Chapter on ‘Family life cycle’ describes the stages of the family life cycle which are independent stages, which include the initiation stage, parenting or expansion stage and retirement and empty nest or contraction stage. At the same time, efforts are also made to identify scope of social work intervention at each of these stages. The chapter on ‘Family and marriage in changing society’ will provide you an understanding of the impact of social change on the institution of family, emerging forms of family, changing functions and dynamics of family and emerging forms and changing functions of marriage. The deliberation on ‘Social work with the families’ will explain to you family disorganization and social work intervention, conceptual framework for assessment and intervention, family stress management, family crisis, family therapy and family enrichment. The chapter on ‘Contemporary problems in family’ explains the major problems that families are facing and the issues that may lead to family disorganization. This chapter will provide you an understanding of causes and effects of the events that lead to problems in smooth functioning of a family or hamper the opportunities of development and well being of certain family members.
Problems such as marital distress, abuse and violence, economic stress, ageing, illness and disability, death, dying and grief have also been discussed in this chapter.

The last chapter of this volume ‘Parenting, adolescents and youngsters’ focuses upon the problems and challenges related to adolescents and youth. This chapter discusses drugs and alcohol abuse, delinquent behaviour, prominent psychological problems of adolescents and sex related issues. It further explains the role of social work profession in educating and guiding families with adolescent members.

The seventeen chapters of the book are designed to help you to have basic understanding of the concepts of society, psychology, institutions of family and marriage and some of the major problems occurring in the families. It will also enable you to understand the problems and issues that one comes across in family life cycle when children reach adolescent phase and youth-hood. The work on the preparation of this book extended over a period of two years and several experts from the conventional system provided the much needed time, energy and expertise to meticulously develop each chapter and bring it up to the present shape. We owe our gratitude to each one of them that include Professor Eshamul Haq from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Beena Antony and Dr. Archana Kaushik from Delhi University, Mr. Joseph Varghese from Visva Bharati and Dr. Joseph Xavier, former principal, Loyola College Chennai. It is our expectation that this book will be of immense value and treasure to several social work educators, practitioners, scholars and students.

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## Contents

1. Social Work and its Relationship for other Disciplines  
   *Joseph Varghese*  
   1

2. Society and Culture  
   *Joseph Varghese*  
   22

3. Indian Society: Composition, Classification and Stratification  
   *Joseph Varghese*  
   63

4. Social Groups, Social Institutions and Social Control  
   *Joseph Varghese*  
   99

5. Social Change: Meaning, Characteristics and Factors  
   *Joseph Varghese*  
   124

6. Psychological Foundation for Social Work Practice  
   *Beena Antony*  
   152

   *Beena Antony*  
   175

8. Social Learning and Motivation  
   *Archana Kaushik*  
   200

9. Defense Mechanisms and Stress  
   *Archana Kaushik*  
   222

10. Stages of Human Growth and Development  
    *Beena Antony*  
    243
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Biological Aspects of Human Growth and Development</td>
<td>Beena Antony</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Concept of Family and Marriage</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Understanding Man and Woman</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Family Life Cycle</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Family and Marriage in the Changing Society</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Social Work with Families</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Contemporary Problems in Family System</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Parenting Adolescents and Youngsters</td>
<td>Archana Kaushik</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>