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## UNIT 2 EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SOCIETY: NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

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### Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Evolution of Society
- 2.3 Society as a System of Relationship
- 2.4 Individual and the Society
- 2.5 Socialisation
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Suggested Readings
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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This chapter aims at creating a fair comprehension of the society and to give an orientation to the social perspective. The chapter will also deal with the close relationship that exists between individuals and society. Apart from these, the process of socialisation is also discussed with an intention to elaborate the significant aspects of socialisation, a fundamental function of the society by which individuals learn to be participants of social interaction. Social interaction is a process basic to social life. It occurs in terms of five basic patterns including cooperation, conflict, social exchange, coercion and conformity. An individual learns to be a part of social interaction through the process of socialisation. Society's continuity depends on its socialisation process since it is through this process that the members of society learn to establish social relationships.

After completing this unit you should be able to know:

- gradual development of human society;
- society and its nature and meaning;
- social relationships and their nature;
- the relationship between individual and society;
- nature of socialisation;
- development of personality through socialisation; and
- significance of Socialisation.

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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The most distinctive feature of human life is its social character. All human beings interact with other human beings in order to survive. Man lives in society and he has to depend on society for his survival. Therefore, both nature and necessity impel man to live in society. Man, from times immemorial, has been trying to comprehend the social environment and in his search for understanding society, he created different social sciences like Sociology, History, Economics, Political Science, Psychology etc. However, the study of society, its functioning, the social relationships present therein and social interactions have been of great significance in this effort to study society. While studying social relationships, which form society, it is essential to study the evolution of society, its systems and structures, the development of institutions and their functions, the customs and rules regulating social relationships, the groups and communities formed by man throughout history, the nature and interdependence of these groups like, family, government, economic groups, religious groups and the phenomenon of social change. In this chapter, we will analyse society, the relationship between individual and society, constituents of society and socialisation process.

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## 2.2 EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SOCIETY

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Society is a complex system of relationships, which are diverse in nature. Society passes through various stages and undergoes enormous changes. In the most primitive stage, society was very simple and every individual lived an individualistic life, trying to know and do things about himself/herself alone. Every man was more or less similar, in so far as his ignorance about organized life was concerned. In this sense, people were homogenous in nature. In the primitive stage, neither they were able to organize their social life, nor could they work together. Thus the primitive society was a homogenous one with simple social relationships. However, as the time advanced, society took the shape of complex network of social relationships, which were heterogeneous in nature.

### Evolution Theory According to Herbert Spencer

Evolution theory, propounded by Charles Darwin was related to organisms. Herbert Spencer was one of the pioneering Sociologists who had introduced theory into Sociology. Herbert Spencer who had formulated the organic analogy about the society, opined that society also passes through various phases of development, exactly the way organisms did. Herbert Spencer had presented his evolutionary scheme in 'First Principles' and again in 'Principles of Sociology'.

As we know, the evolution theory says that simple organisms developed into complex organisms through a process that consumed hundreds of centuries. Similarly, the evolutionary approach explicates that society also passed through many stages before assuming the present complex state. Since the evolutionary theory of society was woven around the concept that society resembles organism, a mention of the Organismic theory is essential. Organismic theory conceives society as a biological system, a greater organism, alike in its structure and function, exhibiting the same kind of unit as the individual organism and

**Introduction to Society**

subject to similar laws of development, maturation and decline. Society's cells are individual persons; its organs and systems are associations and institutions. Herbert Spencer said that society has its youth, its prime, its old age and death.

According to Spencer, the principles of evolution are: (a) that forces tend to persist; (b) that matter is indestructible; and (c) that everything moves along the lines of least resistance or greatest attraction, impelled by some source, matter, accompanied by a concomitant dissipation of motion, tends to integrate. Spencer said, "Evolution is the integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to definite, coherent heterogeneity." For Spencer, society is also subject to a similar process of evolution that is changing from a state of 'incoherent homogeneity' to a state of 'coherent heterogeneity'. Evolution is, thus, a gradual growth or development from simple to complex existence.

In the primitive societies, there was no system, nothing definite, except their incoherent or loose group formations. Thus they formed an 'indefinite, incoherent homogeneity'. But gradually their experiences, realizations and knowledge increased. They learnt to live and work together. The task of social organization was taken on, division of labour was elaborated and each found particular type of work, which could do best. All worked in an organized and definite way towards a definite goal. Thus, a state of 'definite, coherent heterogeneity' was reached.

Spencer said that the main fact of evolution was the movement from simple societies to various levels of compound societies. By the aggregation of some simple societies, compound societies arose; through further aggregation of compound societies, doubly compound societies arose; by aggregation of doubly compound societies, trebly compound societies arose. A simple society consists of families, a compound society of families unified into clans, a doubly compound society finds clans unified into tribes, and the trebly compound societies such as our own, are those in which tribes have been brought together into nations or states. With the increase in size, structure increases as well as differences in power and in the occupations of the members.

**Development of Society According to August Comte**

August Comte, the father of Sociology, also had presented a well-knit theory on the development of society. Comte's theory on the development or evolution of society was based on his Law of Three Stages. According to his Law, human knowledge evolves through three different stages; or in other words, there are three different ways, in which human mind explains the phenomena, each way leading to the next in successive order. The three stages are;

- 1) ***Theological or Fictitious State:*** In this phase, human mind seeks to understand the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects, in short the Absolute knowledge.
- 2) ***Metaphysical or Abstract State:*** This state is a modification of the first in so far as the mind supposes abstract forces and personified abstractions, instead of supernatural beings, inherent in all beings and capable of producing all phenomena.
- 3) ***The Positive or Scientific State:*** In the final state, the mind gives up vain search absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and

the causes of phenomena, and applies to the study of their laws, that is their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. Reasoning and observation, duly combined are the means of this knowledge.

Comte traced a direct relationship between the stages of human thinking and social organization. In other words, Comte's contention is that each type of human thinking represents a particular type of social organization.

When human mind was in the theological state, political events, for example, were explained by the will of the God, and political authority was based on divine right. Military and monarchical social organization was the keynote to the theological thinking. Kings were considered as the direct representatives of, or, next to God on earth, ruling the society under the direction of God.

In the metaphysical state of mind, the political authority was based on the doctrines of abstract right. Divine rights were dropped, and in their place, natural right determined the political relations of human beings. The legal aspect of social organization was developed, with the result that it tended to be formal and structural.

Whereas in the positive stage society enters into an industrial era. At this stage, the whole of our knowledge is characterized by positivism, or scientific outlook. Scientific outlook resulted into material inventions and therefore, into proper utilization of natural resources.

### **Characteristics of the Evolution of Society**

- Movement from simple to complex society
- Homogeneity to heterogeneity
- Gradual and slow process
- An adaptation to changing environment and social context
- Series of related changes in social system
- Progress towards greater size, coherence and definiteness.

It is unambiguous that society, as it exists today, has come a long way by registering gradual but continuous changes and modifying itself. Change in any aspect of society was not introduced abruptly. All the same, social change has been incessant and the society is an ever-changing phenomenon, which grows, decays, renews itself and accommodates itself to changing conditions and undergoing vast modifications in the course of time.

### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note :** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What do you understand by the evolution of society?

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2) According to Comte, the present society is in which stage of development?

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### 2.3 SOCIETY AS A SYSTEM OF RELATIONSHIP

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Aristotle said that man by nature is social animal. Human beings are animals who live in societies. However, human beings are not the only creatures who live in societies. Ants, termites, birds, monkeys, apes and countless other creatures and animals do the same. But mere life in a group does not mean that these animals have a 'society' among them or the society of human beings is the same as animal society. To differentiate between the animal society and the human society, it is necessary to define society and social relationships that exist in human society.

In the context of Sociology the word 'society' refers to a complex pattern of norms of interaction that arise among a group of people. Whereas in common parlance, the word 'society' is used for designating the members of a specific group and it is generally understood in relation to tangible observations. In Sociology, people are valuable only as agencies of social relationships, which are intangible. Therefore, society is a system of relationships, the pattern of norms of interaction by which the members of the society maintain themselves.

#### Definition of Society

MacIver and Page defined society as, "It is the web of social relationships." T. Parsons says, "Society may be defined as the total complex of human relationships in so far as they grow out of action in terms of mean-end relationship, intrinsic or symbolic."

Giddings defined society as, "Society is the union itself, the organization, the sum of formal relations in which associating individuals are bound together." Lapiere laid emphasis on the complex pattern of interaction that is seen in the society. He defines, "The term society refers not to group of people, but to the complex pattern of the norms of interaction, that arise among and between them." Prof. Wright emphasized that a collection of people need not be called a society. He said, "Society is not a group of people, it is the system of relationships that exists between the individuals of the group".

Generally, there are two approaches while defining society and the relationships present in the society.

1) **Functional approach:** Society is defined as a complex of groups in reciprocal relationship, interacting upon one another, enabling human



organisms to carry on their life-activities and helping each person to fulfill his wishes and accomplish his interests in association with other members of the group. The approach takes social relationship as a tool for a certain end.

- 2) **Structural approach:** According to this approach, society is the total social heritage of folkways, mores and institutions, of habits, sentiments and ideals. In other words, the entire society could be divided into systems of social relationships, which are closely related to one another.

The discussion on society would be simpler once the 'social' nature of relationships is defined. Some Sociologists say that society exists only when the members know each other and possess common interests or objects. If two persons are traveling in a train, their relationship of co-existence in the same compartment, of being at the same time in the same place, does not constitute a society. But as soon as they come to know each other, the element of society is created. Therefore, the reciprocal awareness is necessary for any social relationship.

Besides, physical proximity is not the sole parameter for the social relationship. By comparing the relationships of inanimate objects like sun and earth, fire and smoke and typewriter and desk we can establish that there is a distinguishable difference between the relationships of inanimate objects and human beings. The typewriter and the desk are in no intelligible sense aware of the presence of one another. Their relationship is not in anyway determined by mutual awareness. Without this recognition there is no social relationship and society. Society exists only when individuals have psychical awareness of the presence of one another. This is why we call social relationship as 'reciprocal awareness'. To further clarify the meaning and the nature of social relationships it could be said that society exists only where social beings behave towards one another in ways determined by their recognition of one another. Any relations so determined, we may broadly call 'social'.

### **Society as a Web of Social Relationships**

According to MacIver and Page, society is "a web of social relationships", which may be of numerous types. Society, as MacIver and Page said is a network of diverse social relationships or in other words, it could be called as the entirety of social relationships that exist in a group.

Society consists of mutual interactions and mutual interrelations of the individuals and it is also a structure formed by these relations. The beings who constitute society must realise their likeness and their interdependence. They must have a community feeling. Society is not a mere agency for the comfort of beings but it's the whole system of social relationships. The social relation of mother and child for instance, is revealed in their attitude towards each other. It is the social fact and not the biological fact, which constitutes the society.

The true nature of society consists not in the external factors of inter-dependence or likeness or authority but in the state of mind of the beings who compose society. It is the pattern, not the people, which is termed as society, and it is not a group but a process of relationships. Therefore, society is a pattern of social relationships or a system of social relationships.

All societies involve a certain level of association. Similarly, society involves more a state or quality of mind than a mere structure. The beings who constitute society must realize their likeness and their interdependence. The relationships between individuals must be in accordance with the norms of the society and therefore, society is not just a collection of people but is the system of relationships that exists between the members of that group.

It should be borne in mind that society is a permanent institution. Its origin goes back to the dawn of history and stretches to those remote corners of the planet where people are living together. It is a kind of natural organization, which has emerged out of the natural instincts of man. That's why Aristotle truly said that man by nature is a social animal. This means that society will exist as long as man will exist.

### Characteristics of Society

- 1) **Society involves Likeness:** Without likeness and the sense of likeness there could be no mutual recognition of "belonging together" and, therefore, no society. Society exists among those who resemble one another in some degree, in body and in mind and who are near enough or intelligent enough to appreciate the fact.
- 2) **Society involves Difference:** Though likeness serves as the basis, society also depends on differences. If people were all alike, their social relationships would be as limited as those of the biological organisms like ants and bees. Groups of ants and bees do not have reciprocity, as every member of is uniquely similar. In human society, different individuals complement one another and there is meaningful social interaction. In our society there is an indefinite interplay of likenesses and differences. The reciprocal relationship of differences is seen at every level of society. For example, family rests on the biological difference between sexes. There are also natural differences of aptitude, capacity and of interest in the society.
- 3) **Difference Subordinate to Likeness:** Society needs likeness and differences or similarities and dissimilarities. While difference is necessary to society, difference by itself does not create society. Difference is subordinate to likeness or likeness gets precedence while difference or dissimilarity works as the basis for the reciprocity among the members of the society. As MacIver observes, "Primary likeness and secondary difference create the greatest of all social institutions – the division of labour." The division of labour which works on the principle of difference is basically cooperation before it is division. Or, this is a deliberate attempt to utilize the diverse abilities of individuals for a common objective.
- 4) **Inter-dependence in the Society:** In addition to likeness, interdependence based on cooperation is yet another essential element to constitute the society. No society can exist without the interdependence of its units. Members of society should be inter-dependent and should cooperate with each other for the smooth running of the society. Individuals cannot live a secluded life in society as society is a necessity for them. Therefore, there has to be interdependence among the members of society.
- 5) **Multiplicity of Relationships:** Society consists of numerous social relationships, which may be hundreds or thousands of types. There are as

many as fifteen relationships based on age, sex and generation in a family alone. Outside the family there is no limit to the number of possible social relationships. Social relationships are as varied as society is complex. The relations of voter to candidate, mother to child, employee to employer, friend to friend, teacher to student, student to student etc are some of the social relationships to name a few. These social relationships can be categorized into “economic”, “political”, “personal”, “impersonal”, “friendly”, “antagonistic” and so on.

These characteristics explain the nature of society and the mode of social relationships. Besides, the above discussion also clarifies that the social nature of relationships that exist in the human society between individuals distinguishes human society from the animal society.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note :** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

- 1) Society is not a group of people, it is ..... that exists between the individuals of the group.
- 2) Society exists only when individuals have ..... awareness of the presence of one another.
- 3) Explain how human relationships are social.

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## 2.4 INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIETY

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Society consists of individuals who are social by nature. It explains that individual and society are inter-dependent. The relationship between them is not one-sided, both are essential for the comprehension of either. Neither the individuals belong to the society as cells belong to the organism, nor the society is a mere contrivance to satisfy certain human needs. The fundamental attribute of man, i.e., his social nature, makes him live in society.

In order to establish the relationship between individual and society, it is necessary to explain in what sense man is a social animal. Similarly there are some other pertinent questions, which need to be answered. In what sense do we belong to society? In what sense does society belong to us? What is the nature of our dependence upon it? How shall we interpret the unity of the whole to which our individual lives are bound? All these questions are aspects of one fundamental question – the relation of the unit, the individual, to the group and to the social system. The following sections will help us answer the aforesaid fundamental questions.



### **Human Beings are Social by Nature**

Man is social animal by nature and he cannot afford to live alone. No human being is known to have developed normally in isolation. Individuals learn social habits and acquire social qualities by living in the presence of others. There are cases, to show that the normal development of an individual's personality is hindered whenever the individual is secluded from society. MacIver cited a case in which two Hindu children who were discovered in a wolf-den in 1920 and who had their abilities seriously retarded. The younger one aged less than two years died immediately after retrieval from the wolf-den. The other child, aged eight, could walk only on all fours, possessed no language except wolf-like growls. She was shy of human beings and felt scared in the presence of human beings. It took strenuous, sympathetic and extensive training for making her learn some social habits. Human nature develops in man only when he lives in society, only when he shares common life with his fellow beings. Human traits that are present in the child could only be developed in the company of human contacts. Society fulfils a vital need in every individual's constitution and the social aspect of human life is a necessity.

### **Necessity Makes Human Beings Social**

Also, man lives in society because necessity compels him to. Many of his needs will remain unsatisfied if he does not have the cooperation of his fellow beings. Every individual is the offspring of a social relationship established between man and woman. The child is brought up under the care of his parents and learns the lessons of citizenship in their company. The child is totally dependent on the society for his existence. If the newborn baby does not receive protection and attention of the parents he would not survive for even a day. The newborn is so helpless and dependent that it cannot protect itself for many years. Unlike this, the newborns of other animals are independent within hours of their birth. It takes barely an hour for a newborn calf to stand on its legs and within hours it starts eating grass. This is the same case with the newborns of most of the animals. Individuals get the needs of food, shelter and clothing fulfilled only by living and cooperating with others. The importance of society for physical and mental development is thus obvious and no individual can become human being unless he lives in society. Sometimes it is the fear of animals or the urge to get acceptance and recognition from others or satisfaction of hunger, thirst and sex drives that make individuals live in a group. The need for self-preservation, which is felt by every being also makes a man social. Therefore, it is not due to his nature alone but also due to his necessities that man lives in society.

### **Society Determines Personality**

It is not just for the survival and fulfilment of needs that man lives in society, but he lives in society for his all around mental and intellectual development. Society preserves our culture and transmits it to succeeding generations. It liberates and limits our potentialities as individuals and moulds our attitudes, beliefs, morals and ideals. The mind of a man who would live outside a society would be the mind of an infant even at the age of adulthood. The cultural heritage, which an individual imbibes by living as the member of the society, directs the personality and thus determines the mental equipment of that individual.

## Theories on the Relationship Between Man and Society

Evolution of Human Society:  
Nature and Characteristics

There are many theories on the origin of society which include, the divine origin theory, force theory, patriarchal and matriarchal theories, social contract theory and organic theory. The divine origin theory says that God had created society. Just as God had created all the animals and inanimate objects of this world, so he created society as well. Whereas the force theory makes society the result of superior physical subjugating weaker, while the patriarchal and matriarchal theories make society the expansion of family system. Besides, there are two theories, which are widely accepted by sociologists. These are Social Contract theory and the Organismic theory. A brief explanation of these two theories will further explain the relationship between individual and the society.

- 1) ***Social Contract Theory:*** Since at least the fifth century before Christ, various philosophers have viewed society as a contrivance or mechanism deliberately set up by men for certain ends. According to some, such as Thomas Hobbes society is a means for the protection of men against the consequences of their own intolerant and conflicting nature. According to him, man in the state of nature was in perpetual conflict with his neighbours on account of his essentially selfish nature. In the words of Hobbes, "life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Every man was enemy to every man. To protect himself against the evil consequence, man organized himself in society in order to live in peace with all. Locke, JJ Rousseau and Adam Smith also supported this theory. Adam Smith said that society is an artificial device created to foster a mutual economy.

As a criticism to this theory it is said that this theory seems to assume that man as individual is prior to society since man had deliberately created society for the fulfilment of his objectives. This notion is untenable as sociality is inborn in man and he can survive only by living in society.

- 2) ***The Organismic Theory of Society:*** This theory is as old as Plato and Aristotle. This theory conceives society as a biological system, a greater organism, alike in its structure and function, exhibiting the same kind of unity as the individual organism and subject to similar laws of development, maturation and decline. Society's cells are individual persons; its organs and systems are associations and institutions. According to the Herbert Spencer, the state is subject to the same laws of growth and decay to which the human body is. It has its youth, its prime, its old age and death. Bluntschli and Murray have supported the organic theory on the origin of the society. As a criticism of the organismic theory it is said that there are significant differences between society and individual organism and therefore an analogy of organism cannot exactly define the relationship between man and society. In the human society the units are not fixed in their respective positions while in the case of an organism its parts are fixed to the body. Yet another criticism is that the units of a society are dispersed persons and are not physically contiguous like cells of an individual or organism.

The relationship between the individual and society is a complementary one and one without the other will not survive. Neither the society itself has a

value beyond the service, which it renders to its members, nor can the individuals thrive without society. Neither the society is inimical to the development of the human personality nor does it exist in its own right.

**Check Your Progress III**

**Note :** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Explain Organismic theory on the relationship between individual and society.

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## 2.5 SOCIALISATION

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When a human child is born it is a biological organism with instincts alone. It practically possesses no abilities that an adult normally possesses. A child knows nothing other than clinging to its mother and sucking milk. The child is therefore, primarily a biological organism than a social being. He gradually learns to live in society by learning the social ways of acting and feeling. With the passage of time, the child learns many things that it otherwise did not know. It learns to identify and to read the face of parents, learns to make sounds, stands up, learns language, receives education and thus the process of learning continues till the death of the individual.

### Meaning of Socialisation

Socialisation, as stated above, is the process by which an individual learns to conform to social norms, a process that makes possible an enduring society and the transmission of its culture between generations. Socialisation has been accepted generally as the gradual process by which an individual becomes a functional member of society.

Ogburn says, "Socialisation is the process by which the individual learns to conform to the norms of the group".

Socialisation according to MacIver "is the process by which social beings establish wider and profounder relationships with one another, in which they become more bound up with, and more perceptive of the personality of themselves and of others and build up the complex structure of nearer and wider association".

As the process of socialisation indicates, it is the gradual change of a biological person to a social person or the process whereby an individual attains the conventional patterns of human behaviour. According to Lundberg, socialisation consists of the "complex processes of interaction through which the individual

learns the habits, skills, beliefs and standards of judgment that are necessary for his effective participation in social group and communities." Socialisation could be conceived as the internalization of social norms. In other words, individual feels the need of conforming to society and he internalizes the social rules, in the sense that these social norms are self-imposed by the individual rather than imposed by means of external regulation. Hence these norms become part of individual's personality. It is an essential element of social interaction. Every individual wants to live in society and get the social recognition. Therefore, they guide their own actions to accord with the expectations of others.

Socialisation is equally essential for individual and the society in general. On the one hand, socialisation helps the individual to gain social acceptance and status by learning social ways of functioning while on the other, process of socialisation helps the society to ensure its smooth and uniform continuity. Unless the members of the society behave in accordance with the norms of the group, it is likely to disintegrate. Hence, it is essential for the society to socialise its members for ensuring the social order.

### Agencies of Socialisation

The process of socialisation begins at birth and continues interminably until the death of the individual. So, the life of an individual is an unceasing learning process. Many agencies become operational in the life of the individual during his life time, and he learns from these agencies chiefly through imitation and from suggestion. A child imitates and learns many activities such as standing, walking and other basic skills. Similarly, it also learns from the instructions communicated to it through language, picture or any such medium. As a child, an individual learns social pattern of behaviour from family, school, playmates etc., while as an adult, the individual learns from religion, state, work group etc. Agencies of socialisation are, therefore, those which help the individual to learn new social ways of life in one way or the other. Let us briefly discuss the chief agencies of socialisation.

- 1) **Family:** The child is born into the family where it is nurtured and looked after by its parents and immediate relatives. Parents, with whom the child enjoys physical proximity during its childhood, are the ones to socialise the child first. He learns speech and language from his parents. Rightly so, family is called the cradle of social virtues from where the child gets the first lessons of love, affection, cooperation, tolerance and self-sacrifice. Therefore, family works as the foundation for the socialisation process of an individual.
- 2) **Religion:** Religion moulds and directs the behaviour of people by laying down behaviour standards for its followers. Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals with reference to the sacred and binds people into social groups. Invariably, all religions cherish a set of values and teach followers to uphold their principles. The religious groups, for example, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc, have their own prescribed codes of conduct, which are to be followed by the followers. Thus, religion regulates the behaviour of people.
- 3) **Peer Group and Friends:** The relationship between a child and his friends is that of mutual give and take and it is based on cooperation and

understanding. Since friends are mostly of similar age, the relationship is that of equality between them. From his friends, a child acquires cooperative morality and some of the informal aspects of culture like fashion, fad, crazes, modes of gratification and other such information, are necessary from the social point of view.

- 4) **Educational Institutions:** The learning that an individual obtains from schools, colleges and other educational institutions with the help of textbooks, teachers and experiments plays a crucial role in his life. School is the first place where an individual as a child learns discipline and formal ways of adjusting with others since the number of children in school is fairly high. It is the educational institution, which enables the optimum development of one's abilities and skills and, therefore, educational institutions help the individual to develop his personality in accordance with the expectations of society.
- 5) **Profession and Employment:** Work or profession has a major role to play in moulding the behaviour of an individual. Individual brings about changes in his life in accordance with his aspiration for a job. And, once the job is achieved, there are many more changes which follow. Profession socialises the individual by inculcating sense of competition, hard work and cooperation in him.
- 6) **State:** It is an authoritarian agency that formulates laws, which in other words, lays down code of conduct for the people. Laws promulgated by the state, for example, traffic laws, property laws, income tax laws etc are enforceable and the members of society should conform to these norms. If there is a violation of these laws, punishment is given to those who disobey these norms. Thus the state ensures conformity in society by enforcing these laws while members of society conform to these in order to avoid punishment by the state. Thereby, the state promotes consistency in the functioning of society.

Apart from these agencies, neighbourhood, kin-group or relatives, marriage, cultural institutions such as art, literature etc also play decisive role in the life of an individual.

### **Functions of Socialisation**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, socialisation is a necessity not only for the society but for the individual as well. The fact that individual cannot survive in isolation and society cannot sustain itself without its members implies that there has to be a proper mechanism to ensure functional coexistence among the members of society. Socialisation ensures both these purposes. The main objectives of socialisation are as follows:

- 1) Develops the personality of an individual and through the process of socialisation an individual learns to make use of his full mental and physical capacities.
- 2) Socialisation establishes uniformity in society.
- 3) It helps individuals to internalize the culture.
- 4) Socialisation inculcates basic discipline among the members of society.



5) It teaches the members the performance of social roles.

Learning about life and its countless demands, opportunities, and expectations is a lifelong process. As the discussion above points out, socialisation is a process through which the members of society learn to live as members of groups and to make necessary adjustments to the way our lives change from youth through middle age to old age. Socialisation does not end when one becomes an adult. It is a lifelong process and involves a number of changes and transitions in life, as well as a number of agents of socialisation beyond the family. Peer groups, schools, work groups, and the mass media all represent important forces shaping the way we adapt to changes in life.

### Check Your Progress IV

- Note :
- a) Use the space provided for your answer.
  - b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the meaning of socialisation.

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit you have been introduced to various concepts related to society. We have discussed some of the important characteristics of society which will provide basic understanding about the why and how of the society. The various theories of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Thomas Hobbes are discussed in detail.

Some of the theories and principles related to the origin and functioning of society is explained. Another important aspect of society which has been discussed in the unit is socialisation — which is the processes by which society influences its members to follow its values, rules, laws, etc. Socialisation helps the individual to adopt oneself to the society. It is important for social workers to know these concepts as they deals with individuals groups and communities which are part of society. Often a person has to decide between how much he/she should stress his/her own desires and needs and how much he/she should surrender to the larger interests of the community. At times she/he may feel exploited as she/he feels that she/he is losing more than she is gaining. Yet in another situation the society may be making unreasonable demands on the individual which may lead to abnormal behaviour.

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## 2.7 KEY WORDS

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- Society** : Complex system of social relationships and not a mere group of individuals.
- Primitive society** : Primordial or ancient society, the members of which were largely involved in food gathering, hunting and very limited agriculture and animal domestication.
- Personality** : All qualities and attributes of an individual. The sum total of an individual including all his faculties, traits, behaviour patterns and other characteristics, which are unique to the individual.

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## 2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Davis, Kingsley (1981), *Human Society*, Surjeet Publications, Delhi.

MacIver, RM and Charles H Page (1971), *Society—An Introductory Analysis*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London and Basingstoke.

Timasheff, Nicholas S. (1967), *Sociological Theory: Its Nature and Growth*, Random House, New York.

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## 2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) Evolution is a gradual growth or development from simple to complex form of existence. It is the movement from simple societies to various levels of compound societies.
- 2) The Positive or Scientific stage

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) System of relationships
- 2) Psychological
- 3) Society consists of mutual interactions and mutual interrelations of the individuals and it is a structure formed by social relationships. Relationships between individuals of a society are 'social' since they behave toward one another in ways determined by their recognition of one another. There is a reciprocal awareness among the members of society and, therefore, we can call human relationships as social relationships.

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) This theory describes society as a biological system, a greater organism, alike in its structure and function, with the same kind of unit as the biological organism and subject to similar laws of development, maturation and decline. Organismic theory considers individuals as the

cells of society while associations and institutions are the organs and systems of society. Society has its infancy, maturation, prime and decline as organisms have.

**Evolution of Human Society:  
Nature and Characteristics**

#### **Check Your Progress IV**

- 1) Socialisation is the process through which an individual gradually learns to live in society by learning the social ways of acting and feeling. In other words, it is the gradual change of a biological person to a social person or the process whereby an individual attains the conventional patterns of human behaviour. It is the mechanism for making an individual a functional member of society.