



SOCIAL CHANGE

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MEANING

- Social change is a concept in sociology which talks about a change in the established patterns of social relations, or change in social values or change in structures and subsystems operating in the society.
- The term social change is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations.
- Auguste Comte the father of Sociology has posed two problems- the question of social statics and the question of social dynamics, what is and how it changes.
- The sociologists not only outline the structure of the society but also seek to know its causes also.
- According to Morris Ginsberg social change is a change in the social structure.

Definition of Social Change

- Social change may be defined as the process which is discernible in the alteration of the structure and functioning of a particular social system.
- It is a term used to describe variation in, modifications of, any aspect of social processes, social patterns, and social interaction within a social organisation.
- Usually social change refers to a significant change in social behaviour or a change in social system rather than minor changes within a small group.

DEFINITIONS

- Lundberg, “Social change refers to any modifications in the established patterns of inter-human relationship and standard of conduct.”
- Morris Ginsberg, “By social change, I understand a change in social structure, e.g., the size of the society, the composition or the balance of its parts or the type of its organization”.
- Gillin and Gillin, “Social changes are variations from the accepted modes of life; whether due to alternation in geographical conditions, in cultural equipment, composition of the population or ideologies and brought about by diffusion, or inventions within the group.

origin

- Social change can originate from either within a society, or from outside of a society.
- ➤ Internal sources of social change are those factors that originate within a specific society that singly or in combination with other factors produce alterations in social institutions and social structure.
- ➤ External sources of social change are events that originate outside of a society to bring about change to social institutions or structures

Characteristics of Social Change:

- (1) Change is Social
- (2) Universal
- (3) Continuous
- (4) Inevitable
- (5) Temporal
- (6) Degree or rate of change is not uniform
- (7) Social Change may be planned or unplanned
- (8) Social change is multi-causal
- (9) Social change creates chain-reactions
- (10) Prediction is uncertain

Characteristics

(1) Change is Social:

- Social change means a change in the system of social relationship.
- Social relationship is understood in terms of social process, social interactions and social organizations.
- In any variation of social process, social interactions and social organizations social change-takes place.
- In another instance it is found that society is like an organization, which never dies.
- New civilizations and societies come up by replacing old societies and thereby retaining some of its elements in its change.
- Thus social change is different from individual change. Its cause and consequences are always social which make it social.

Characteristics

- (2) Universal:
 - Social change is universal.
 - Because it is present in all societies and at all times. No society remains completely static.
 - The society may be primitive or modern, rural or urban, simple or complex, agrarian or industrial, it is constantly undergoing change.
 - The rate or the degree of change may vary from society to society from time to time but every society keeps on changing.
 - A changeless society is an unreality.



(3) Continuous:

- Social change is a continuous process but not an intermittent process.
- Because the changes are neither stopped nor the societies are kept in museum to save them from change.
- It is an on- going process without any break. In the process of change every society grows and decays, where it finds renewal and accommodates itself to various changing conditions.
- The sources, direction, rate and forms of change may vary time to time but it is always continuous.

Characteristics

- (4) Inevitable:
- Change is inevitable.
- It is the human nature that desires change and also it is his tendency to bring change and to oppose or accept change.
- Human wants are unlimited which always keep on changing.
- To satisfy these wants social change has become a necessity not only to him but also to the society.

Characteristics

(5) Temporal:

- Social change is temporal. Change in anything or any object or in a situation takes place through time.
- Sometimes some social changes may bring about immediate results while some others may take years to produce results.
- Similarly, some social changes spread rapidly and also disappear rapidly.
- Movements, style, fashion and cults are the examples of this type

Characteristics

(6) Degree or rate of change is not uniform:

- Though social change is an ever-present phenomenon, its degree or rate or what we call the speed is not uniform.
- It varies from society to society and even in the same society from time to time.
- Sometimes the degree of change is high and sometimes low depending upon the nature of society like open and close, rural and urban and traditional and modern etc.
- For example, in the rural social structure the rate of change is slower because the rate of change is not governed by any universal law, whereas it is quick in the urban societies.

Characteristics

- (7) Social Change may be planned or unplanned:
- Social change takes place sometimes with planning and sometimes without planning.
- Social change which occurs in the natural course is called the unplanned change.
- The unplanned changes are spontaneous, accidental or the product of sudden decision.
- Usually the change resulting from natural calamities like flood; drought, famines, volcanic eruption, etc. are the instances of unplanned changes.
- Here in this unplanned change there is no control on the degree and direction of social change.
- It is the inborn tendency of human beings that they desire change. So sometimes plans, programmes and projects are made effective by them to bring change in the society.
- This is called planned change.
- As it is consciously and deliberately made, there is every possibility to have control on the speed and direction of change.
- For example, the five years plan made by the government.

Characteristics

(8) Social change is multi-causal:

- A single factor may cause a particular change but it is always associated with a number of factors.
- The physical, biological, demographical, cultural, technological and many other factors interact to generate change.
- This is due to mutual interdependence of social phenomenon.

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- (9) Social change creates chain-reactions:
 - Social change produces not a single reaction but chain-reactions as all the parts of the society are inter-related and interdependent.
 - For example, the economic independence of women has brought changes not only in their status but also a series of changes in home, family relationship and marriages etc

Characteristics

- (10) Prediction is uncertain:
- We can see some elements for prediction in social change. But the prediction we make is uncertain.
- It is because of three reasons.
- They are: (a) There is no inherent law of social change
- (b) The forces of social change may not remain on the scene for all times to come, and
- (c) The process of social change does not remain uniform.
- Apart from the above characteristic features it may be said that social change can be qualitative or quantitative.
- It is a value free term as it does not imply any sense of good or bad, desirable or undesirable. It is a concept distinct from evolution, process and development which are regarded as key concepts in the literature of social change.

TYPES

Types of social change:

According to cultural anthropologist David F. Aberle, the four types of social change include:

- Alternative
- Redemptive
- Reformative
- Revolutionary
- These different movements are distinguished by how much change they advocate and whether they target individuals or the entirety of a society.

Alternate social change

- Alternative social change operates at the individual level and seeks to change minor aspects of behaviour.
- Campaigns against texting and driving are an example of alternative social change in the sense that they advocate a small change in behaviour and advocate this change on a fairly small scale.

Redemptive social change

- Redemptive social change functions on the individual level but advocates a dramatic change within the individual.
- The spread of religion is an example of redemptive social change.
- Recovery programs like Alcoholics Anonymous are also examples of redemptive social change as they advocate dramatic personal change for a specific portion of the population.

Reformative social change

- Reformative social change seeks to enact a specific change on a broad scale.
- The movement to obtain marriage rights for same- sex couples is an example of reformative social change.
- This movement seeks a very specific set of changes but desires these changes on a wide scale.

Revolutionary social change

- Revolutionary social change indicates dramatic change on a large scale.
- Revolutionary movements seek to fundamentally restructure society.
- Examples of revolutionary social change include the American Civil Rights Movement and the Russian Revolution of the early-20th century.

Factors of social change

- Main factors of Social Change:
 - Demographic Factors
 - Biological Factors
 - Cultural Factors
 - Technological Factors
 - Environmental factors
 - Psychological factors
 - Other factors

Demographic Factors

- social change demographic factors have been viewed from two different angles.
- They are the qualitative and quantitative.
- Qualitatively speaking it refers to physical potentialities, mental abilities etc. that are determined by genetic order, though the hereditary quality of successive generation play some role in cultural determination, it cannot be ascribed the place of a deterministic cause of social change.
- But the demographic factor in its quantitative aspect has been playing the most decisive role in causing social change.

Biological

Biological Factors:

- Accordingly biological factor plays an important role in the causation of social change.
- An ordinarily biological factor refers to those which are concerned with the genetic constitution of the human beings.
- Human beings use animals, birds, plants and herbs according to the direction of his own culture.
- At the same time human beings protect themselves from different harmful elements.
- If there is increase or decrease of these animals, birds, plants etc. it will bring a number of changes in human society.

Cultural

- Cultural Factors:
- Man learns his behavior and behavior which is learnt is called culture.
- Singing, dancing, eating, playing belong to the category of culture. It includes all that man has acquired in the mental and intellectual sphere of his individual and social life.
- It is the expression of our nature, in our modes of living and thinking, in art, in literature, in recreation and enjoyment.
- The basic elements of culture like language, religion, philosophy, literature, faith and values will take long time to change due to the influence of another culture.
- The co-existence of two different cultures for a long period can cause cultural diffusion leading to changes in both. India, for example, discarded age long customs like Sati and Child marriage because of her contact with the Europeans.

Technology

- Technology is fast growing. Modern age is the “Age of Technology”.
- Technology changes society by changing our environments to which we In turn adopt.
- This change is usually in the material environment and the adjustment that we make with these changes often modifies customs and social institution initiates a corresponding social change.
- Developments in the field of transportation and communication reduced the social distance which gave momentum to cultural diffusion and thereby to social change.

Environmental factor

Environmental Factor:

- Due to floods, earthquake, excessive rain, drought, change of season etc..
- We can find imbalance in population which directly affects the social relationship and these are modified by such natural occurrences.
- Variation in the availability of water resources and mineral resources can also affect social change.
- If we think about a person or an individual who is growing under the roof of a particular society and he lives among different kinds of people.
- So, the environment of society affects himself and as we know that an individual is a part of society who brings social change. Thus environment factor bring social change.

Psychological factors

- Psychological factors:
- Some writers notice a psychological process in the formation of society and, according to them, human relations based on the considerations of the individual mind and the group mind shape and mould social systems.
- Therefore, when physical forces like floods, earthquakes and epidemics are considered as factors causing social change, the importance of the psychological factor in that regard cannot be ignored.
- Change in attitude of society towards family planning, dowry, caste system, women's education etc. which brought about radical changes in society are primarily psychological in nature.

Other factors

Other factors:

- In addition to above mentioned factors other elements such as
- wars,
- ethnic tensions,
- competition for resources, trade unionism,
- banking system,
- human rights movement,
- enhanced environmental awareness etc. have resulted in wide spread social variation and modification.

Necessity of Social Change

- In spite of all the economic growth of the last forty years, the gap between the richest 1.5 billion and the majority of the world's people is actually growing, with over a billion people in deep poverty and many hundreds of millions more living on the margins.
- In such an era of an increasingly constrained and divided world the need for progressive social change is obvious.
- Indeed, unless we can adapt creatively and compassionately, then prospects for a peaceful and stable world will rapidly fade.