

B.A 1 (SEM 2)

Paper 1

Social Change and Education

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Social change refers to any significant alteration over time in behaviour patterns and cultural values and norms. By “significant” alteration, sociologists mean **changes** yielding profound **social** consequences. Social change is way human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time, having a profound impact of society.

The problem of social change is one of the central foci of sociological inquiry. It is so complex and so significant in the life of individual and of society that we have to explore the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of social change in all its ramifications.

Change is the law of life. Stagnation is death. It is said, “Today is not yesterday, we ourselves change. No change is permanent, it is subject to change. This is observed in all spares of activity. Change indeed is painful, yet needful”. Flowing water is wholesome, and stagnant water is poisonous. Only when it flows through and alters with changes, it is able to refresh and recreate. Change is an ever-present phenomenon. It is the law of nature. Society is not at all a static phenomenon, but it is a dynamic entity. It is an ongoing process. The social structure is subject to incessant changes. Individuals may strive for stability, yet the fact remains that society is an every changing phenomenon; growing, decaying, renewing and accommodating itself to changing conditions.

The human composition of societies changes over time, technologies expand, ideologies and values take on new components; institutional functions and structures undergo reshaping. Hence, no society remains complete static. Incessant changeability is very inherent nature of human society.

A social structure is a nexus of present relationships. It exists because social beings seek to maintain it. It continues to exist because men demand its continuance.

Meaning of Social Change:

Change implies all variations in human societies. When changes occur in the modes of living of individuals and social relation gets influenced, such changes are called social changes.

Social change refers to the modifications which take place in life pattern of people. Hence, social change would mean observable differences in any social phenomena over any period of time. Social change is the change in society and society is a web of social relationships. Hence, social change is a change in social relationships. Social relationships are social processes, social patterns and social interactions. These include the mutual activities and relations of the various parts of the society.

Social change may be defined as changes in the social organization, that is, the structure and functions of the society. Theorists of social change agree that in most concrete sense of the word 'change', every social system is changing all the time. The composition of the population changes through the life cycle and thus the occupation or roles changes; the members of society undergo physiological changes; the continuing interactions among member modify attitudes and expectations; new knowledge is constantly being gained and transmitted.

Defining Social Change:

According to Jones "Social change is a term used to describe variations in, or modifications of any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interaction or social organization".

As Kingsley Davis says, "By Social change is meant only such alternations as occur in social organization – that is, the structure and functions of society".

According to Maclver and Page, "Social change refers to a process responsive to many types of changes; to changes the man in made condition of life; to changes in the attitudes and beliefs of men, and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and the physical nature of things".

Morris Ginsberg defines, "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".

P. Fairchild defines social change as “variations or modifications in any aspects of social process, pattern or form.

B. Kuppaswamy says, “Social change may be defined as the process in which is discernible significant alternation in the structure and functioning of a particular social system”.

H.M. Johnson says, “Social change is either change in the structure or quasi-structural aspects of a system of change in the relative importance of coexisting structural pattern”.

According to M.D. Jenson, “Social change may be defined as modification in ways of doing and thinking of people.

As H.T. Mazumdar says, “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 operation of a society”.

Lundberg and others. “Social change refers to any modification in established patterns of inter human relationships and standards of conduct.”

Anderson and Parker. “Social change involves alteration in the structure or functioning of social forms or processes themselves.”

By analysing all the definitions mentioned above, we reach at the conclusion that the two types of changes should be treated as two facts of the same social phenomenon. Two types of changes are e.g.

(i) changes in the structure of society,

(ii) changes in the values and social norms which bind the people together and help to maintain social order. These two type of changes should not, however, be treated separately because a change in one automatically induces changes in the other.

Thus it may be concluded that social change refers to the modifications which take place in the life patterns of people. It does not refer to all the changes going on in the society. The changes in art, language, technology; philosophy etc., may not be included in the term ‘Social change’ which should be interpreted in a narrow sense to mean alterations in the field of social relationships.

Characteristics of Social Change:

The phenomenon of social change is not simple but complex. It is difficult to understand this in its entirety. To understand social change well, we have to analyze the nature of social change.

1. Social change is community change:

Society is a “web of social relationships” and hence social change obviously means a change in the system of social relationships. Social change does not refer to the change in the life of an individual or the life patterns of several individuals. It is a change which occurs in the life of the entire community. In other words, only that change can be called social change whose influence can be felt in a community form.

2. Social change is a universal phenomenon:

Social change occurs in all societies. No society remains completely static. Each society, no matter how traditional and conservative, is constantly undergoing change. Speed and extent of change may differ from society to society. Some change rapidly, others change slowly.

3. Social Change occurs as an Essential law:

Social change occurs as an essential law:. Social change may occur either in the natural course or as a result of planned efforts. By nature we desire change. Our needs keep on changing. To satisfy our desire for change and our changing needs social change becomes a necessity

4. Social Change is Continuous:

Society is a system of social relationship. But these social relationships are never permanent. They are subject to change. Society is an ever-changing phenomenon. It is undergoing endless changes. It is an “ongoing process”. These changes cannot be stopped. Society is subject to continuous change. Here it grows and decays, there it finds renewal, accommodates itself to various changing conditions.

5. Social Change Involves No-Value Judgement:

Social change is neither moral nor immoral, it is amoral. The question of “what ought to be” is beyond the nature of social change. The study of social change involves no-value judgement. It is ethically neutral.

6. Social Change is bound by Time Factors:

Social change is temporal. It happens through time, because society exists only as a time-sequences. We know its meaning fully only by understanding it through time factors. The reason is that the factors which cause social change do not remain uniform with the

changes in time .Social change may be Short-term and Long-term Change. The conceptualization of the magnitude of change involves the next attribute of change, the time span. That is to say, a change that may be classified as ‘small-scale from a short-term perspective may turn out to have large-scale consequences when viewed over a long period of time.

7. Speed of social change:

Speed of social change is not uniform and speed of social change is affected by and related to time factor. While social change occurs in all societies, the rate, tempo, speed and extent of change is not uniform In most societies it occurs so slowly that it is often not noticed by those who live in them. Social change in urban areas is faster than in rural areas.

8. Definite prediction of social change is not possible:

It is difficult to make any prediction about the exact forms of social change. There is no inherent law of social change according to which it would assume definite forms. Likewise it cannot be predicted as to what shall be our attitudes, ideas, norms and values in future.

9. Social change shows chain-reaction sequence:

A society’s pattern of living is a dynamic system of inter-related parts. Therefore, change in one of these parts usually reacts on others and those on additional ones until they bring a change in the whole mode of life of many people.

10. Social change results from the interaction of a number of factors:

As a matter of fact, social change is the consequence of a number of factors. A special factor may trigger a change but it is always associated with other factors that make the triggering possible. The reason is that social phenomena are mutually interdependent. None stand out as isolated forces that bring about change of themselves. Rather each is an element in a system.

11. Social changes may be considered as modifications or replacement:

Social changes may be broadly categorised as modifications or replacements. It may be modification of physical goods or social relationships. There may also be modifications of social relationships. Change also takes the form of replacement. A new material or non-material form supplants an old one .Similarly; old ideas have been replaced by new ideas

12. Social Change may be Small-scale or Large-scale:

A line of distinction is drawn between small-scale and large scale social change. Small-scale change refers to changes within groups and organizations rather than societies, culture or civilization. According W.E. Moore, by small-scale changes we shall mean changes in the characteristics of social structures that though comprised within the general system identifiable as a society, do not have any immediate and major consequences for the generalised structure (society) as such.

13. Social Change may be Peaceful or Violent:

At times, the attribute 'peaceful' has been considered as practically synonymous with 'gradual' and 'violent' with 'rapid'. The term 'violence' frequently refers to the threat or use of physical force involved in attaining a given change.

'Peaceful' has to do with the changes that take place by consent, acceptance or acquisition and that are enforced by the normative restraints of society.

14. Social Change may be Planned or Unplanned:

Social change may occur in the natural course or it is done by man deliberately. Unplanned change refers to change resulting from natural calamities., Planned social change occurs when social changes are conditioned by human engineering. Plans, programmes and projects are made by man in order to determine and control the direction of social change.

Although no hard and fast categories have yet been developed into which we can fit different types of change, the use of the foregoing distinctions, may be helpful in clarifying one's conceptualization of any type of change or at least, they can help one to understand the complexities involved in developing a definition of the subject of social change.

Factors of Social Change:

Physical Environment:

Major changes in the physical environment are very compelling when they happen. Human misuse can bring very rapid changes in physical environment which in turn change the social and cultural life of a people. Many human groups throughout history have changed their physical environment through migration. In the primitive societies whose members are very directly dependent upon their physical environment migration to a different environment brings major changes in the culture. Civilization makes it easy to transport a culture and practice it in a new and different environment.

Population changes:

A population change is itself a social change but also becomes a casual factor in further social and cultural changes. When a thinly settled , secondary group relations multiply, institutional structures grow more elaborate and many other changes follow. A stable population may be able to resist change but a rapidly growing population must migrate, improve its productivity or starve. Great historic migrations and conquests of the Huns, Vikings and many others have arisen from the pressure of a growing population upon limited resources. Migration encourages further change for it brings a group into a new environment subjects it to new social contacts and confronts it with new problems.

Isolation and Contact:

Societies located at world crossroads have always been centres of change. Since most new traits come through diffusion, those societies in closest contact with other societies are likely to change most rapidly. Areas of greatest intercultural contact are the centers of change. War and trade have always brought intercultural contact and today tourism is adding to the contacts between cultures.

Social Structure:

The structure of a society affects its rate of change in subtle and not immediately apparent ways. .When a culture is very highly integrated so that each element is rightly interwoven with all the others in a mutually interdependent system change is difficult and costly. But when the culture is less highly integrated so that work, play, family, religion and other activities are less dependent upon one another change is easier and more frequent. A tightly structured society wherein every person's roles, duties, privileges and obligations are precisely and rigidly defined is less given to changes than a more loosely structured society wherein roles, lines of authority, privileges and obligations are more open to individual rearrangement.

Attitudes and Values:

Societies differ greatly in their general attitude toward change. People who revere the past and preoccupied with traditions and rituals will change slowly and unwillingly. When a culture has been relatively static for a long time the people are likely to assume that it should remain so indefinitely. They are intensely and unconsciously ethnocentric; they assume that

their customs and techniques are correct and everlasting. A possible change is unlikely even to be seriously considered. Any change in such a society is likely to be too gradual to be noticed. A rapidly changing society has a different attitude toward change and this attitude is both cause and effect of the changes already taking place. Rapidly changing societies are aware of the social change. They are somewhat skeptical and critical of some parts of their traditional culture and will consider and experiment with innovations. Such attitudes powerfully stimulate the proposal and acceptance of changes by individuals within the society. Attitudes and values affect both the amount and the direction of social change.

Cultural Factor:

Cultural Factor influences the direction and character of technological change. Culture not only influences our social relationships, it also influences the direction and character of technological change. It is not only our beliefs and social institutions must correspond to the changes in technology but our beliefs and social institutions determine the use to which the technological inventions will be put. The tools and techniques of technology are indifferent to the use we make of them. Thus cultural factors play a positive as well as negative role in bringing about technological change. Cultural factors such as habits, customs, traditions, conservatism, traditional values etc may resist the technological inventions. On the other hand factors such as breakdown in the unity of social values, the diversification of social institutions craving for the new thoughts, values etc may contribute to technological inventions.

Technological Factors:

Technology is a byproduct of civilization. When the scientific knowledge is applied to the problems in life it becomes technology. Technology is a systematic knowledge which is put into practice that is to use tools and run machines to serve human purpose. Science and technology go together. In utilizing the products of technology man brings social change. The social effects of technology are far-reaching. According to Karl Marx even the formation of social relations and mental conceptions and attitudes are dependent upon technology. He has regarded technology as a sole explanation of social change.

Education and Social Change

Education can be used as a tool to empower the individual. Through child centred learning, students are able to see their own role in transformation. Societal change comes from the collective transformation of the individuals within that society. It has become secular today. It is an independent institution now. Education has been chiefly instrumental in preparing the way for the development of science and technology. Education has brought about phenomenal changes in every aspect of men's life. Francis J. Brown remarks that Education is a process which brings about changes in the behavior of society. It is a process which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of society and to make positive contribution to the progress of society.

Education in the Present Period

Education today is oriented to promoting values of an urban, competitive consumer society. Through the existing education system, India has produced in the last five decades number of scientists, professionals and technocrats who have excelled in their fields and made a mark at the national and international levels. The top scientists, doctors, engineers, researchers, professors, etc. not those who were educated abroad but had got their entire education in India.

It is not a question of the extent to which education provides or fails to provide employment to people but it is a question of education providing modern technology for the benefit of the poor and deprived people. It is a question of the quality of education. Instead of merely viewing the growing population as a liability, we should change the population into an asset and strength along with trying to control its growth. This can be done only by education and human development. The three main deficiencies in the present education system may be described as follows: (1) The present education does not generate or fortify the type of knowledge that is relevant to our changed society. (2) Technology associated with a particular body of knowledge is inappropriate to our stage of development in terms of its employment potential or investment demands. (3) Education has failed to provide value framework which may prepare committed politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals on whom our nation can depend for sophisticated system of support services to be useful in taking the country to the highest level.

Though education does not guarantee high status and higher positions to all people, yet without education, an individual is unlikely to achieve social mobility. Education plays a

role in equalizing opportunities in three ways. (1) By making it possible for all those who have the desire to be educated and the ability to benefit by that facility; (2) By developing a content of education which will promote the development of a scientific and objective outlook. (3) By creating a social environment of mutual tolerance based on religion, language, caste, class, etc. for providing equal opportunities of social mobility to all individuals in society, and for providing equal opportunity to secure good education is crucial.

Education, Social Change and Modernisation

Education has been accepted as one major agency of socialization, and teachers and educational institutions as socializing agents. In describing education as an instrument of social change, three things are important: the agents of change, the content of change, and the social background of those who are sought to be changed, i.e. students. Educational institutions under the control of different cultural groups reflect the values of those groups which support and control education. In this situations teachers impart specific values, aspirations to the children.

Social reformers, who were educated emphasized values like removal of caste restrictions, equality of women, doing away with social evil social customs and practices, voice in the governance of the country, establishing democratic institutions and so on. They, thus, wanted to teach liberal philosophy through education for changing society. In other words they regarded education as a flame or light of knowledge which dispelled the darkness of ignorance. The use of education for spreading the values of modernization came to be emphasized from the 1960s and 1970s onwards.

Highly productive economies, distributive justice, people's participation in decision-making bodies, adoption of scientific technology in industry, agriculture and other occupations and professions were accepted as goals for modernizing the Indian society. And these goals were to be achieved through liberal education. Thus, modernization was not accepted as a philosophy or a movement based on rational values system but as a process that was to be confined only to economic field but was to be achieved in social, political, cultural and religious fields too. Education was sought to be utilized as channel for the spread of modernity.

According to the sociological perspective, education does not arise in response of the individual needs of the individual, but it arises out of the needs of the society of which the individual is a member¹. The educational system of any society is related to its total social system. It is a sub system performing certain functions for the on-going social system. The goals and needs of the total social system get reflected in the functions it lays down for educational system and the form in which it structures it to fulfil those functions. In a static society, the main function of the educational system is to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generations. But in a changing society, these keep on changing from generation to generation and the educational system in such a society must not only transmit the cultural heritage, but also aid in preparing the young for adjustment to any changes in them that may have occurred or are likely to occur in future. In contemporary societies, “The proportion of change that is either planned or issues from the secondary consequences of deliberate innovations is much higher than in former times.” This is more so in societies that has newly become independent and are in a developing stage. Consequently, in such modern complex societies, education is called upon to perform an additional function of becoming. Thus, the relationship between educational system and society is mutual; sometimes the society influences changes in educational system and at other times the educational system influences changes in the society.

Conclusion

Education has become one of the influential instruments of social change in India. It has led to the mobilization of people’s aspirations for development and change. Thus in modern complex national societies, education can neither be regarded as a controlling force conserving cultural heritage, nor could it be viewed as an agent of social change. It can only be regarded as a cooperative force in bringing about social changes decided by the forces possessing more pervasive power in society. Thus the Indian education system needs a complete overhaul through proper legislation and its effective implementation. Legislations should be made taking into account the regional diversities of each state. The masses should be made aware of the new developments.

References

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What is Social Mobility?

Social mobility refers to the shift in an individual's social status from one status to another. The shift can either be higher, lower, inter-generational, and intra-generational, and it cannot be determined if the change is for good or bad.

Types of Social Mobility

Social mobility can take different forms, and people can experience different types of mobility in different stages of their lives. The type of mobilities are now independent of one another and can often overlap. They are only distinguished for the purpose of analysis.

1. Horizontal mobility

It occurs when a person changes their occupation but their overall social standing remains unchanged. For example, if a doctor goes from practicing medicine to teaching in a medical school, the occupation's changed but their prestige and social standing remains the same. Sorokin describes horizontal mobility as a change in religious, territorial, political, or for family and other horizontal shifts with no change in the vertical position.

2. Vertical mobility

It refers to a change in the occupational, political, or religious status of a person that causes a change in their societal position. An individual or social object moves from one social stratum to another. Vertical mobility can be ascending or descending.

Ascending involves an individual moving from a group in a lower stratum to a higher one or the creation of a similar group with a higher societal position, instead of side by side with its existing group. Descending mobility occurs for example when a businessman incurs losses in his business and is forced to declare bankruptcy, resulting in a move to a lower stratum of society.

3. Upward mobility

It is when a person moves from a lower position in society to a higher one. It can also include people occupying higher positions in the same societal group. However, upward mobility, while seen as a good thing, can also come at a cost for individuals.

When a person moves upwards, they need to leave behind familiar surroundings such as family and places. They may also need to change their way of thinking and behavior. The individual will need to adapt to the new environment as a result of their upward movement and adopt different behaviors in the new society.

4. Downward mobility

Downward mobility takes place when a person moves from a higher position in society to a lower one. It can occur when someone is caught performing a wrongful act that can result in the loss of the position they currently hold. Downward mobility can be extremely stressful for people who face a rapid decline in their social status; they may find it hard to adapt to the new environment as it is not similar to the standard of living they are used to. Downward mobility is an example of the extent to which a society values equal opportunity and structure.

5. Inter-generational mobility

Inter-generational mobility happens when the social position changes from one generation to another. The change can be upward or downward. For example, a father worked in a factory while his son received an education that allowed him to become a lawyer or a doctor. Such societal change also causes the generation to adopt a new way of living and thinking. Inter-generational mobility is affected by the differences in the parents' and their offspring's upbringing, changes in population, and changes in occupation.

6. Intra-generational mobility

The intra-generational change in societal position occurs during the lifespan of a single generation. It can also refer to a change in position between siblings. One way is when a person climbs up the corporate ladder in their career. For example, an individual starts their career as a clerk and through their life moves on to a senior position such as a director. One sibling may also achieve a higher position in society than their brother or sister.