

07. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Social Institutions

Social institutions have been created by man from social relationships in society to meet such basic needs as stability, law and order and clearly defined roles of authority and decision making.

Every organisation is dependent upon certain recognised and established set of rules, traditions and usages. These usages and rules may be given the name of institutions. These are the forms of procedure which are recognised and accepted by society and govern the relations between individuals and groups.

Definition

Wood ward and Maxwell: An institution is a set of folkways and mores into a unit which serves a number of social functions.

Horton: An institution is an organized system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures and meets certain basic needs of society.

Landis: Social institutions are formal cultural structures devised to meet basic social needs.

Characteristics

- i. Institutions are the means of controlling individuals.
- ii. Institutions depend upon the collective activities of men.
- iii. The institution has some definite procedures which are formed on the basis of customs and dogmas.
- iv. Institution is more stable than other means of social control.
- v. Every institution has some rules which must be compulsorily obeyed by the individual.

Five major institutions in rural sociology are political, educational, economic, family and religion.

1. **Political:** Government as political institution, administers the regulatory functions of Law and order, and maintains security in society. Form of government and its method of working depends on the accepted patterns of behaviour in a society. Development work is now-a-days a major responsibility of the government. For effective implementation of programmes, government may decentralise its functioning by creating local self-government like panchayats at different level.
2. **Education:** is the process of socialisation, which begins informally at home and then

formally in educational institutions. Education as an institution helps develop knowledge, skill, attitude and understanding of the people and strive to make them competent members of the society. Education widens the mental horizon of the people and make them receptive to new ideas. .

3. **Economic:** Economy provides basic physical sustenance of the society by meeting the needs for food, shelter, clothing, and other necessary supply and services. Economic institutions include agriculture, industry, marketing, credit and banking system, co-operatives etc.
4. **Family:** is the most basic social institution in a society, and is a system of organized relationship involving workable and dependable ways of meeting basic social needs.
5. **Religion:** -is belief in supernatural. Religion constitutes a set of beliefs regarding the ultimate power in the universe, the ideal and proper pattern of behaviour, and ceremonial ways to expressing these beliefs. Religion also provides a foundation for the mores of the society. Taboos in various cultures have religious sanction. Religion provides a means by which individuals can face crises and ups and downs in life with strength and fortitude.

Function

1. Sex regulation.
2. Reproduction and perpetuation of the family and human race.
3. Socialisation
4. Provision of economic maintenance and livelihood in many cultures.
5. Provision of love, affection and security to the individual.
6. Provision of class status to the individual of the family into which he has been born.

Definition of Family

Family is defined by Burgess and Locke as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption; constituting a single household, interacting and inter communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture.

Elliott and Merrill defined the family as "the biological social unit composed of husband, wife and children".

Characteristics of family

Family is the most universal group. Family is classified based on structure (patriarchal or matriarchal) and residence.

1. Patriarchal family

It is the family where male is the head of family inclusive of powers. He is the owner and administrator of the family property and right. To him all persons living in the family are subordinated.

2. Matriarchal family

The authority vests in the woman head of the family. The male is subordinated to her. She is the owner of property and rules over family. This type of family is said to prevail among the primitive people, who led a wandering or hunting life.

3. Based on residence the family is classified as

- a) *Matrilocal family*: In this type of family husband goes to live in the house of his wife.
- b) *Patrilocal family*: Wife goes and lives in the house of her husband.

4. Based on the marriage the family is classified as:

- i. *Monogamous family*: In which man marries one woman only at one time.
- ii. *Polygamous family*: In this kind of family one man marries many women at one time.
- iii. *Polyandrous family*: In this kind of family one man marries many women and lives with all of them or each of them alternatively.

5. The family is also classified based on ancestry as follows:

- i. *Matrilineal family*: Here woman is believed to be the ancestor of the family.
- ii. *Patrilineal family*: Here the ancestry continues through the father.

6. Religion: is belief in super natural. Religion constitutes a set of beliefs regarding the ultimate power in the universe, the ideal and proper pattern of behaviour and ceremonial ways of expressing these beliefs. Religion also provides a foundation for the mores of the society. Taboos in various cultures have religious sanction. Religion provides a means by which individuals can face crises and ups and downs in life with strength and fortitude.