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2nd Edition



Applied Sociology *for* Nursing & Allied Health Sciences

Tara Madhusudan



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CHAPTER



Social Processes

- Social interaction meaning definition
- Social process meaning and definition
- Cooperation
- Competition
- Conflict
- Accommodation
- Assimilation
- Isolation
- Forms of social processes-conjunctive or associative social processes
- Associative social processes-disjunctive or dissociative social processes

Society is a system of social relationships. These relationships represent the functional aspects of society. Social processes deal with the functional aspects of human association. These social processes therefore may be described as the fundamental ways in which men interact and establish relationships. They are certain repetitive forms of behavior, which are commonly found in social life. There are different types of social relationships giving rise to different types of social processes. Thus, social process is mainly dependent upon the kind of social interaction that individuals or group members have with each other. Social interaction and social processes are interrelated.

Mac Iver defined society as a "web of social relationships". Social relationships are important for man because man is sociocultural by nature. He is a gregarious being. i.e. he has the tendency to live in groups and cannot live alone. As members of the groups, they establish relationships with the others in the groups, giving rise to behavior patterns. The behavioral pattern of one individual effects the behavior of the other. Thus, behavior systems grow out of interactions. Without these interactions there cannot be any social or group life. Only people coming together do not make up a group. It is only when there is awareness and response between the

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individuals that a social relationship is established. Thus, interaction is the basic ingredient of social relationships. Society is rooted in social interaction. Therefore, according to Park and Burgess, the two important elements in social interaction are - social contact and communication.

DEFINITION

1. According to Elridge and Merrill "Social interaction is the general process whereby two or more persons are in meaningful contact as a result of which their behavior is modified, however slightly.
2. Green defines social interaction as "the mutual influences that individuals and groups have on one another in their attempts to solve the problems and their striving towards goals.
3. According to Gist "social interaction is the reciprocal influences human beings exert on each other through inter stimulation and response".
4. Dawson and Gettys define social interaction "as a process whereby men interpenetrate the minds of each other."

From the above definitions, social interaction means the social relationships where in there is a reciprocal stimulation and response between individuals to satisfy their needs and interests and to solve their problems. The whole society is based on social interaction. It is on the basis of social interactions that culture arises and continues to be there in the society. It is through social interaction that the process of socialization of individuals takes place. Thus, social interaction becomes a necessary condition for the existence of the society.

1. According to Horton and Hunt—Social process is "the repetitive forms of behaviors, which are commonly found in social life".
2. Mac lver describes social process as "the manner in which the relations of members of a group, once brought together, acquire a distinctive character."
3. According to Ginsberg social processes mean "the various modes of interaction between individuals or groups, including cooperation and conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay."

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4. According to Green A.W social process is "the characteristic ways in which interaction occurs."

All the above definitions show that the basis for social process is social interaction. There are different kinds of social processes depending upon the social relationships. Some of the important forms of social processes are cooperation, competition, conflict, accommodation, assimilation and isolation.

FORMS OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

Social Processes can be classified as:

1. Conjunctive or associative social processes like cooperation, organization adjustment, accommodation, integration and assimilation.
2. Disjunctive or dissociative, social processes like conflict, isolation, competition, differentiation, disintegration, and contravention and war.

ASSOCIATIVE OR CONJUNCTIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES

Cooperation

Meaning

Cooperation is an associative social process. It is derived from the Latin words "co" meaning "together" and "operari" meaning "to work". Therefore, it generally means two or more persons working together for the pursuit of a common goal or objective or reward. It is the most basic and common social process for group life and for the society. It may be a small group like the family, where members have to cooperate with each other to complete the functions of the family or a larger group like a school, where again cooperation is required for the organization to function properly. The basic needs of the individual like food, shelter and clothing can be provided and satisfied only through cooperation. It is a physical, biological, psychological and social necessity of man during his life time. Thus, it is a universal and continuous social phenomenon. It is essential for economic life also. Division of labour and specialization are examples of economic cooperation.

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Definition

1. *Merrill and Elridge*—"Cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end".
2. *Fair child*—"Cooperation is the process by which the individuals or groups combine their efforts, in a more or less organized way for the attainment of a common objective".
3. *AW Green*—"Cooperation is the continuous and common endeavor of two or more persons to perform a task or to reach a goal that is commonly cherished".

TYPES OF COOPERATION

Direct Cooperation

Individuals work together to achieve a common objective i.e., the members of the group have an identical function. Members do the work "in company" with others. Doing the work together gives them social satisfaction. There is a direct face-to-face contact among the members like tilling the field together or playing together or taking out a cart from the mud.

Indirect Cooperation

Indirect cooperation is based on the principle of division of labor and specialization of skills. People do unlike jobs to achieve a common end. Each individual has his own specialized function to perform. For example, in the construction of a building, the masons, plumbers, carpenters and others, cooperate together with each other doing their specialized jobs.

Primary Cooperation

Primary cooperation is found in primary groups like the family, peer group, neighborhood and so on. There is an identity of ends and interests between the individuals and the group. Means and goals become one for everyone. All of them work together to achieve a common end. They share the rewards of this combined effort.

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Secondary Cooperation

Secondary cooperation is found in secondary groups like industry, government, educational groups, commercial groups, religious groups, etc. In this kind of cooperation, each individual performs a specialized function. The individual members work together to achieve a common goal, but each member does a specialized task and is interested in his own gain. For example, an individual working in an industry for the gain of wages or promotions, power and prestige.

Tertiary Cooperation

This kind of cooperation may be found between big and small groups to meet a particular situation. One is forced to cooperate with the other group due to circumstances. The attitudes of the cooperating parties are opportunistic and the organization of their cooperation is fragile and loose. This kind of cooperation may be found between two or more political parties or religious groups or caste groups and so on.

ROLE OF COOPERATION IN SOCIAL LIFE OR IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION

Cooperation means working together for the pursuit of a common goal or objective or reward. It is one of the most basic and common form of associative social process for group life and for the society. It is a universal and continuous social phenomenon. The basic needs of the individual like food, shelter and clothing can be provided and satisfied only through cooperation. It therefore, plays a very important role in the life of the individual. His very survival in society depends on cooperation. It is a physical, biological, psychological, social and economic necessity of man during his life time. Man and Society can progress and develop only because of Cooperation. Thus, according to Prince Kropotkin it is difficult for man to survive without it. Society and man advance through cooperation and decline in its absence.

ACCOMMODATION

Meaning

Accommodation is one of the important types of associative social processes. It is through this process that the social order and peace

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is maintained. Change is the law of nature. Changes keep occurring in society and the environment around man. This may lead to a number of conflicting situations for man. There are continuous conflicts between individuals and groups. They have to therefore adjust themselves to the conflicting situations because man does not like to live in a conflicting situation. He would like to resolve them and live in peace and order. This process of adjustment of man to the social and environmental conditions around him is called accommodation. Thus, accommodation is the process of getting along with the situations that arise around man, which helps people to work together, whether they like it or not. The famous psychologist, J.M. Baldwin, first used this term to mean the changes in the behavior of individuals, which help them to adjust to their environment.

Definition

1. *Mac Iver*—The term accommodation refers to the process in which man attains a sense of harmony with his environment.
2. *Ogburn and Nimkoff*—Accommodation is a term used by sociologists to describe the adjustment of hostile individuals or groups.
3. *Horton and Hurt*—Accommodation is a process of developing temporary working agreements between conflicting individuals or groups.
4. *Park and Burgess*—Accommodation is a natural resolution of conflicts. In accommodation, the antagonism of hostile element is for the time being regulated and conflict disappears as overt action although it remains latent as a potential.
5. *GilIin and GilIin*—Accommodation is the process by which competing and conflicting individuals and groups adjust their relationship to each other in order to overcome the difficulties, which arise in competition, contravention or conflict.

Characteristics

1. Accommodation is the natural result of conflict. If there were no conflicts, there would be no need for accommodation. When individuals or groups have conflicts, they try to come together to solve them by a settlement. Such settlements, temporary or permanent may, be called accommodation.

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2. Accommodation is universal. Accommodation has been found in all societies and at all times in social life. Conflicts are always there among individuals and groups in all societies. People cannot live in a state of conflicts. Therefore, people try to make adjustments in order to live in a peaceful state, which takes the form of accommodation. Thus, it becomes necessary.
3. Accommodation is a continuous process, where conflicting individuals and groups have to necessarily make adjustments among themselves. The process of accommodation is there throughout the life of the individual, when he has to accommodate or adjust himself to the various situations in his life. Whenever there are conflicts, sooner or later, accommodation follows.
4. Accommodation may be conscious or unconscious. Most of the time, the process of accommodation is unconscious i.e., man adjusts himself to the social environment around him. All through his life, man goes through the process of socialization, where he learns to live according to the norms of the society. He is controlled by the different norms of the society like the customs, traditions, morals, etc. Thus, he unconsciously learns to accommodate himself with his family, caste, class, peer group, neighborhood, work place, etc. i.e., the total social environment in which he lives. Accommodation may also be conscious where individuals or groups consciously try to make adjustments to conflicting situations. It is a deliberate attempt on the part of the individuals or groups to come together and start working together. They try to resolve their differences, for example, workers and management coming to an agreement on some conflicting issues and the workers calling off their strike by coming back to work.
5. Accommodation is a mixture of both love and hate. The effects of accommodation may vary with circumstances. For example, it may act to reduce conflict between persons or groups or it may serve to postpone a conflict or it may permit groups marked by sharp socio-psychological distance to get along together. In short, it may prove to be beneficial to both the parties involved.

FORMS OR METHODS OF ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is the social process of adjustment of man and groups, to the social and environmental conditions around him,

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especially in conflicting situations. Gillian and Gillian have given the following forms of accommodation.

Yielding to Coercion

Coercion is the use of or the threat of force to solve a conflict. In such cases, parties involved have an unequal strength. Generally, the stronger party uses force over the weaker party to come to an agreement and accept its terms. For example, the country, which wins the war, imposes its conditions over the vanquished country.

Compromise

In a compromise, the parties involved are almost of equal power. In such cases, each party to the dispute makes some concessions and yields to some demands of the other. The "all or nothing" attitudes give way to a willingness to yield to certain points in order to gain others. For example, the settlement of disputes between labor and management in industry on aspects of wages, hours of work, etc. is a case of compromise.

Arbitration

When two conflicting parties are not able to come to an agreement on their own, they take the help of a third party to come to a compromise. The decision of the third party is binding on both parties. This is called arbitration.

Mediation

In this case, the third party i.e., a mediator only advises the conflicting parties. The mediator does not have any power to settle the conflict. His decisions are not binding on the parties. He only tries to find a solution to the problems of the conflicting parties. For example, labor-management conflicts.

Conciliation

In conciliation, the third party tries to persuade the conflicting parties to develop friendship and come to an agreement. It is generally used to settle labor-management disputes.

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Toleration

Toleration is based on the policy of "live and let live", where there is no settlement of disputes but there is only the avoidance of overt conflict between the parties. They try to bear each other because they know that their differences are irreconcilable. Thus, they decide to co-exist with their differences. For example, the coexistence of a number of religions and religious practices in India.

Conversion

Conversion involves a sudden rejection of one's beliefs, conviction and loyalties and adopting others views or policies or ideology. This occurs when there are differences of opinion among individuals or groups. Such conversions can be observed in religious beliefs and in the political fields.

Rationalization

Rationalization involves plausible excuses or explanations for one's behavior i.e., the individual or party ties to justify its own behavior. They are not ready to accept their faults and shortcomings and blame others for their own behavior or faults. For example, a student may blame the school or teachers for his bad performance in the examination but will not accept his own fault of not putting in enough efforts in his studies.

Super Ordination and Subordination

In any society, there are always relations of superiority and inferiority based on different factors. The individuals therefore have a certain fixed position or status in the society. They accept their relative positions as a matter of fact and accommodation is said to have reached a state of perfection. This is what happened in the traditional caste system of India. Such an accommodation results in harmony, friendship and sympathy between the superior and the inferior groups or individuals.

Sublimation

Sublimation is substitution of non-aggressive attitudes and activities for aggressive ones. It may take place among individuals or groups for

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example, methods suggested by Jesus Christ or Gandhiji to conquer violence and hatred by love and compassion.

ROLE OF ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is one of the important social processes through which the social order and peace of the society is maintained. Conflicts arise in the society, which disturbs the peace and order of the society. Therefore, efforts are made in all the societies to bring about the resolution of conflicts between antagonistic groups. Accommodation checks conflict and helps persons and groups to maintain cooperation. It helps the individual to adjust himself to the changed conditions. With such adjustments, individuals are able to carry on their daily life activities inspite of different interests and points of view. Accommodation thus, becomes necessary to maintain social life. It can be at the individual or social level. Society itself is the result of accommodation.

ASSIMILATION

Assimilation is an associative type of social process or interaction, which is also a type of adjustment like accommodation. In this process, the persons and groups acquire the culture of other groups in which they come to live, by adopting its values and attitudes, its pattern of thinking and behaving, i.e., its way of life. It requires more fundamental changes than accommodation. Assimilation is concerned with the absorption and incorporation of one culture by another. It is a process of fusion.

Definition

1. *Biesanz*—Assimilation is the social process where by individuals or groups come to share the same sentiments and goals.
2. *Ogburn and Nimkoff*—Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar, become similar and identified in their interests and outlook.
3. *Samuel Koenig*—Assimilation is the process whereby persons and groups acquire the culture of another group.
4. *Bogardus*—Assimilation is a process whereby attitudes of many persons are united and thus develop into a united group.

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5. *Horton and Hurt*—Assimilation is the process of mutual cultural diffusion through which persons and groups come to share a common culture.

Characteristics

1. Assimilation is not confined to a single field only. It generally means the fusion of two distinct cultural groups. Assimilation can take place in any field. It is not limited to any single field. Assimilation is a process of learning like socialization. It starts when an individual comes into contact with other cultures. Assimilation is a social and psychological process. For example, children are gradually assimilated into the adult society. There can be assimilation between the husband and wife after their marriage or in the religious field, when people get converted into some other religious sect or group.
2. Assimilation is a slow and gradual process. It takes quite sometime before individuals and groups become one with each other and accept each others ways and outlook. This kind of fusion of personalities and groups usually takes time. There has to be a continuous and direct contact among them. Thus, the social contacts established finally result in assimilation. The speed of the process of assimilation depends on nature of the contacts. If the contacts are primary, assimilation occurs naturally and rapidly and if they are secondary assimilation takes place very slowly.
3. Assimilation is an unconscious process. In the process of assimilation, the individual or group is mostly unconscious of what is happening. Unknowingly many times, the individuals and groups give up their own cultural traits and adopt the new ones, when they come into contact with other cultural groups.
4. Assimilation is a two-way process. This is because it is based on the principle of give and take. This process is called as acculturation. Acculturation is the process whereby one cultural group, which is in contact with another cultural group borrows from it certain cultural elements and incorporates it into its own culture. It effects both the groups. Generally, the culturally weaker group borrows the elements of the culture of the stronger group. In course of time, it gets merged with the stronger culture. For example, the

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exchanges of cultural traits between the Aryans and the Dravidians is a case of acculturation.

Factors Favoring or Promoting Assimilation

Toleration

Toleration helps people to come together, to develop contacts and to participate in common social and cultural activities. Assimilation becomes easy when individuals and groups are tolerant towards the cultural differences of others.

Close Association and Intimate Social Relationships

Intimate and close social relationships help in the process of assimilation. For example, in a primary group, like the family, assimilation takes place naturally and rapidly whereas in a secondary group, it takes place very slowly because the relationships are impersonal, indirect and superficial.

Amalgamation

Complete assimilation takes place when there is an amalgamation of individuals or groups as in the case of intergroup marriages.

Cultural Similarity

When there are similarities in cultures, assimilation takes place quickly and at a faster rate.

Education

Education brings about a change in the behavior of the people. Public education plays an important role in bringing about an assimilation of culture.

Equal Social and Economic Opportunity

When people have equal social and economic opportunities, they are able to mix freely with each other, which helps in the process of assimilation.

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Applied Sociology *for* Nursing
& Allied Health Sciences

Salient Features

- This book has been written for graduate courses of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences covering prescribed syllabus
- Gives a better understanding of man and society by dealing with the society and man, social groups to which he belongs, his culture, social stratification, population and other social problems in society
- Will help health care professionals in understanding and evaluating patients in a holistic manner.

Tara Madhusudan obtained her MA (Sociology) and Diploma in Higher Education from Mumbai University, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. She has worked as a Lecturer in Sociology at KJ Somaiya College of Arts and Commerce, Mumbai for about five years. Formerly, she was teaching at the RV College of Nursing and RV College of Physiotherapy, Bengaluru, affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. She has strong passion for teaching, 15 years and counting, as a guest lecturer for Sociology for Nursing and Physiotherapy degree courses under the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. She has three decades of experience teaching Sociology for BA and MA degree courses of Bangalore University, Karnataka, India at multiple renowned institutions in Bengaluru. She has co-authored two textbooks of Sociology for XI and XII grade of Maharashtra State Secondary Board.

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