

Revision Notes
Chapter 7
Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society

Social change

- Change is the most permanent feature of any society. Social change can be defined as transformation in the methods of thinking and working of people.
- It is basically changes in social structures and social relationships of a society.
- At the most basic level, social change refers to changes that are significant and which alter the underlying structure of an object or situation over a period of time.
- Social change does not include any and all changes, but only big ones, changes which transform things fundamentally.
- Social change occurs due to physical, social, demographic, cultural and technological factors.
- Population growth influences adversely on the usage of natural resources which also causes social change.
- Changes that take place slowly over a long period of time are referred to as evolutionary changes.
- Changes that occur comparatively quickly, even suddenly, are referred to as 'revolutionary changes'.
- Social change is a broader concept. It includes all the areas of society like political, cultural, economic and physical etc. By and large there are five broad sources of social change i.e. environmental, technological, economic, political and cultural change.
- Social change can be seen in terms of structural changes. Structural change refers to transformation in the structure of society to its institutions or the rules by which these institutions run e.g. Paper money as currency marked a major change in the organisation of financial markets and transactions.
- Changes in values and beliefs can also facilitate change.
- Some sociologists have offered a distinction between endogenous change and exogenous change.



- It can be argued that wars and conquest (exogenous origin) have played an active part in bringing about major social changes in societies across the world.
- But in all societies, including those in which the initial impetus has come from outside, social change has depended to a great extent upon the activities of various social groups within the society.
- Environmental changes can bring social changes in two ways. Destructive changes are caused by natural disaster and are often irreversible. New discoveries in the environment can open up new livelihood options and leads to social change in the society.
- Technology also alters nature and relationships. It allows us to adopt to the problems posed by nature. For example, Japan being mostly hilly and cold country developed expertise in electrical and electronic gadgets.
- Industrial revolution has caused massive social changes in almost all the societies of the world.
- Use of gun powder, paper, mode of transport, railways and aviation have brought tremendous social changes.
- The social changes due to technological factors are very fast and complex.
- Political changes due to warfare between countries or kingdoms can usually create immediate consequence of social change.
- Political changes internally within the society like the rejection of monarchy can bring about social change.
- Political changes lead to redistribution of power and thus brings social change in the society.
- Religious beliefs and norms help organise society like the bhakti movement influencing social structure in medieval India.
- Evolution of new ideas can also lead to social change. For example, the idea about the position of women in society changed from ancient to modern time leading to change in the social structure.
- Social changes occur differently in rural and urban societies.
- Rural societies are mostly agriculture based and this lacks technology and specialisation.

People are more comfortable with traditional knowledge and members of their group instead of experts.



- Joint family system, caste system, superstitions, homogeneity and illiteracy are very common in rural societies. In such societies social change is particularly very slow.
- Urban societies are mostly industrialised. There is differentiation and stratification not only on the basis of caste but also class.
- Heterogeneity in occupation is common. There are a variety of people and culture in a high density area.
- The association and relationship are secondary and time based.
- People of different castes, religions and regions live together with more tolerance.
- Urban societies are slightly individualistic and characteristic segregation of groups and functions significantly.
- Cities are basically commercial hubs.
- In such urban societies social changes are drastic and quick.
- As social change is inevitable, similarly all societies need to have a network of social control.

Social order

- Social order means systematic arrangement of the social structure.
- It helps in active maintenance and reproduction of patterns of social relationships.
- It helps society to prevent, control and regulate social changes.
- Social order is needed for systematic functioning of society.
- Social order is generally the periphery of the dominant groups. Hence, any changes that may alter their stability in the society will be resisted by them.
- The oppressed group would be interested in bringing changes that is favourable to them and will alter the position of the dominant groups. Hence, the dominant group use social order to prevent, control and regulate social changes that alter the norms and values which are considered as accepted by them.
- Social order can be achieved in two ways; through spontaneous consent and compulsion to obey

Social control

- Social control means the active maintenance and reproduction of a particular pattern of social relations and of values and norms.
- All societies encourage members spontaneously. They abide by a set of rules and



norms or people are compelled in various ways to obey such norms.

Power

- Power is the ability to make others do what you want regardless of what they themselves want.
- Different forms of power exist in society; i.e. domination, authority and law.
- Domination can be referred as a relationship of power that is stable and settled and the parties involved have become accustomed to their relative positions in this relationship.
- In normal times dominant group has decisive influence on society. It is quite similar to forced cooperation as people do things that they don't want but without creating conflict.
- Authority is defined by Max Weber as the legitimate form of power that implies conformity to existing norms of right, propriety and justice.
- Authority is power that is considered to be justified or proper. For example, a police officer, a judge, or a school teacher all exercise different kinds of authority as part of their jobs.
- There are written documents specifying their authority, and what they may and may not do.
- It's a form of power that is associated with the official position that an individual has and not with the individuals themselves.
- The fact that they have authority automatically implies that other members of society have agreed to abide by its rules and regulations.
- A law is an explicitly codified norm or rule. It is usually in written form comprising of formal rules by which society is governed and it is applicable to all citizens.
- There are laws that specify how laws are to be made or changed, or what is to be done if someone violates them.

Non conformity to social order

- Due to the presence of conflict and competition in society non conformity to social order can take place.
- Non-conformity in the society against its social order can take various forms, it can be very a general non-conformity or it can take a serious form.



-
- Contestation is a broad form of insistent disagreement. Competition and conflict are more specific than this. Counter cultures among faith is example of this. These are refusal to conform to prevalent social norms.
 - Contestations are manifestation of protest against laws or lawful authorities.
 - The notion of crime is strictly derived from the law. A crime is an act that violates an existing law.
 - It goes beyond the boundary of legitimate dissent as defined by law.
 - Most of these acts cannot claim any great moral virtue as defined by humanity and social order.
 - Violence can be an act that can involve physical, mental or emotional harm.
 - It can be classified as legal and illegal. Legitimate use of violence is the monopoly of the state within its jurisdiction. All other acts are termed as illegal with exception to use during rare situation like self-defence.

