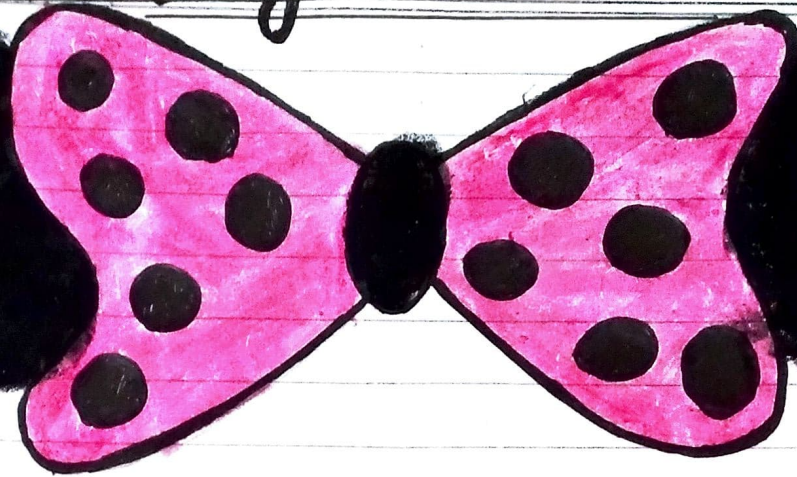


# Assignment :- I

Roll No. .... Scholar No. ....



Name : NEHA SAINI

Class : BA - II Year

Subject : Sociology

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Submitted to : Laxmi Thakur

College : Sri Satya Sai

College for Womens,  
Bhopal







## Social structure

### \* Meaning of Social structure

Social structure is an important concept in sociology. Every society has a pattern of organisation composed of the structures resulting from the associations of men with each other.

Social structure is the social framework of the society i.e. the skeleton of the society. The human society is not an indivisible or compact concept. It is a system divisible in parts or organs. When these parts or organs are systematically arranged they form a skeleton or structure of human society. This systematically arranged outline organism of society is called as social structure.

### \* Definitions of thinkers

- Radcliff Brown — "The components of social structure are human beings, the structure itself be an arrangement of persons in relationship ~~into~~ institutionally defined and regulated."

Talcott Parsons — Social structure has "a particular arrangement of the interrel interrelated





institutions, agencies, and social patterns as well as the statuses and roles which each person assumes in the group."

- Linsberg — "Social structure is concerned with principal form of social organizations, i.e., types of groups, associations, institutions and the complex of these which constitute societies."
- Karl Mannheim — "Social structure is the web of interacting social forces from which have arisen the various modes of observing and thinking."
- MacIver & Page — "Social structure is the various modes of grouping together, comprises the complex pattern of social structure. In the analysis of social structure, the role of diverse attitudes and interests of social being is revealed."

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### Characteristics of Social Structure

- (i) The Social structure is systematised interrelated unit :- The social structure is made up of various units. These units are never scattered or independently lying. Rather, these units have definite & meaningful interrelationship among them.





(ii)

Social structure is an abstract :- Mac-Iver & Page Parsons both the scholars have admitted that social structure as an abstract concept. Their view is that the social structure formed by the various institutions, agencies patterns & status & roles etc. The society is formed of social relationships which are abstract, where the structure is too abstract.

(iii)

Social structure is not an Indivisible system :- Every social system is formed of several and different units. The individuals, groups - institutions, associations, and organisations, etc. are these units. Thus a social structure is formed of several parts or segments hence it is not single and indivisible.

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Features or Elements of social structure

(i)

Normative system :- The normative system presents the society with ideas & values and the individuals perform their roles in accordance with the accepted norms of society.

(ii)

Position system :- The position system refers to the statuses and roles of individual. Individuals have varied and unlimited



desires, aspirations and expectations which could at least partially be fulfilled if they are assigned roles according to their capacities and capabilities. The proper functioning of social structure depends upon proper assignment of roles and statuses.

- (iii) Action system — A member should be prepared to accept a role and act accordingly. It is the object or goals to be achieved at by the social structure.

### \* Nature of social structure

- (i) Social structure is an abstract and intangible phenomenon.
- (ii) Associations and institutions comprising individuals are the units of social structure.
- (iii) These institutions and associations are interrelated.
- (iv) Social structure is a living structure which is created and maintained for a time and it changes. There can be no structure, which is always permanent or stable.





## \* Formal & Informal structure social structure

• Formal social structure :- The structure which has the legality of authority and the hierarchy in the office reward & communication, is called formal social structure.

Eg :- Administrative, political, economic etc.

• Informal social structure :- The social structure which is not in the regular order is considered as informal structure. In informal structure, individual influence cannot be ruled out.

## \* Social Function

### Meaning of Social Function

In every society, individuals have certain specified functions to be fulfilled. Functions may be divided as (i) Social functions and (ii) Manifest and latent function.

Any particular structure - a type of sub-group, a role, a social norm or a cultural value is said to have function if it contributes to the fulfilment of one or more of social needs of social system.





(i) Social function and dysfunction :- A function which contributes to the fulfilment of one or more of the social needs of a social system or sub-system is called social dysfunction. It hinders the fulfilment of one or to these needs.

(ii) Manifest and latent function :- Manifest functions are those that are intended and recognised. Latent functions are unorganised and unrecognised. Everybody realises that latent functions have some functions to perform in all social structures and the manifest functions alone are not responsible for everything in social structure and without taking latent function into consideration every attempt at reforming the society will be a failure.

\* Definitions of thinkers

(i) Durkheim's :- "The function" of a social institution is the correspondance between it and the needs of the social organism. (It may be noted the



that Radcliffe-Brown prefers to substitute for the term 'need' the term - "necessary conditions of existence".)

- (ii) R.K. Merton :- He defines function as "those observed consequences, which make for the adaptation and adjustment of a given system."

## \* Functional problems of social systems

The functional problems of social system are:-

- (i) Pattern maintenance and tension management :-  
 'Pattern maintenance' means that the units of whole structure must learn the pattern and invest them with the appropriate attitude of respect. Any social system, therefore, must have mechanisms of socializations through which cultural patterns come to be incorporated in the personalities of individual members.

As for the function of tension management, it is said to be noted that the units of any social system are subject to emotional disturbances and distractions which must be





managed, if the units are to be able to carry on effectively.

(ii) Adaptation :- A given social system should adapt or adjust to its social and non-social environment. This is possible through division of labour or role differentiation among the members of the society. As no one person can perform simultaneously all the tasks that have to be so performed, there should be role differentiation among members though every person could perform diverse tasks with their knowledge and skills.

(iii) Goal attainment :- Every social system has one or more goals to be attained through co-operative effort. Adaptation is required to attain the goals. But human and non-human resources must also be mobilized in some effective way according to the specific nature of tasks. Proper allocation of resources is necessary for both adaptation and goal attainment.

(iv) Integration :- To achieve the goals of social system, people are required to





work in close co-operation with each other in integration, in addition, they are also required to have good morals because without moral a there can be no integration.

## Views of Radcliffe Brown on social structure

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Radcliffe Brown viewed social structure as actual as individual organism according to him both the social structure and the human organism are susceptible to change but they are steady by way of change he cannot that the organs of both the structures are responsible to improvement of or destruction the abilities of human organism first enhance from ~~in~~ infancy to maturity and then their downfall begin in old age similarly in social structure new human beings take their birth and the old go on dying.

However inspite of this non-stop change their primary elements stay secure in different phrases we may additionally say that social structure is constantly under change while outer framework is stable.





## Views of Radcliffe Brown on Social Function

According to Radcliffe Brown function of some social element is that contribution of that element which it provides to social life in the form of activity of social system.

He further told when concept of function is used in social science, then it is assumed that there are some essential conditions for the existence of human societies like that of animal organism. Out of these essential conditions the most important one is that different organs of society should keep on performing their determined functions properly. As a result of these functions, entire social-life exists. Reason being society or social life is a system in itself and functioning of this system is the cause of its continuity and existence. He further told that functioning of social system is combined form of activities of elements found under this system. Thus, different elements of social system contribute to maintain existence of society or social life, while performing their functions. According to Radcliffe Brown, this contribution of social organs or elements is their function.





## \* Views of Talcott Parson on Social Structure

According to Talcott Parson social structure is a arrangement of interrelated institutions, agencies, and social patterns, as well as the statuses and roles which each person assumes in the group. It is that social structure is that continuity of various organs of society which gets created in a society at a particular time as a result of relation of social institutions, situations & roles etc. Thus, social structure is that external form or nature, which a particular society achieves at particular time as a result of systematic systematisation of social associations and institutions in a definite way.

## \* Views of Talcott Parson on Social Function

There are many organs of society, these are named as associations, groups, institutions etc. These organs do various jobs to keep social structure in systematic form. For the fulfillment of social needs and to provide social structure a systematic form the work done by the organs of society is called social function.





In other words, the necessary action for existence and continuity of social life, which is performed by various units of society is called Junction.

