

INTERACTION & SOCIAL PROCESSES

Meaning of Social Interaction:

- Social interactions are reciprocal relationships which not only influence the interacting individuals but also the quality of relationships.
- Eldredge and Merrill say, “Social interaction is thus the general process whereby two or more persons are in meaningful contact-as a result of which their behaviour is modified, however, slightly”.

- Gish :- “The reciprocal influence human being exert on each other through interstimulation and response”
- According to Gillin and Gillin, “By social interaction we refer to social relations of all sorts in functions”

Meaning of Social Process:

- Social processes refer to forms of social interaction that occur repeatedly. By social processes we mean those ways in which individuals and groups interact and establish social relationships
- There are various of forms of social interaction such as cooperation, conflict, competition and accommodation etc.

- According to Horton and Hunt, “The term social process refers to the repetitive form of behaviour which are commonly found in social life”.
- Ginsberg says, “Social processes mean the various modes of interaction between individuals or groups including cooperation and conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay”.

Types of Social Processes:

- social processes have been classified into two broad categories, variously entitled 'conjunctive and disjunctive, or
- 'associative and dissociative'.
- The associative or conjunctive social processes are positive.
- These social processes work for the solidarity and benefit of society.
- This category of social processes include cooperation, accommodation, assimilation and acculturation etc.

Associative Process:

1. Cooperation:

- The term 'cooperation' has been derived from two Latin words – 'Co' meaning 'together and Operary meaning 'to work'.
- Hence, cooperation means working together for the achievement of a common goal or goals.
- When two or more persons work together to gain common goal, it is called cooperation.

Associative Process:

1. Cooperation:

- Cooperation is one of fundamental processes of social life. It is a form of social process in which two or more individuals or groups work together jointly to achieve common goals. Cooperation is the form of social interaction in which all participants benefit by attaining their goals.

- According to Merrill and Eldregde,
“Cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end”.

characteristics of cooperation:

- 1. Cooperation is an associative process of social interaction which takes place between two or more individuals or groups.
- 2. Cooperation is a conscious process in which individuals or groups have to work consciously.
- 3. Cooperation is a personal process in which individuals and groups personally meet and work together for a common objective.
- 4. Cooperation is a continuous process. There is continuity in the collective efforts in cooperation.

- 5. Cooperation is a universal process which is found in all groups, societies and nations.
- 6. Cooperation is based upon two elements such as common end and organised effort.
- 7. Common ends can be better achieved by cooperation and it is necessary for the progress of individual as well as society.

Types of Cooperation:

- **(i) Direct Cooperation:**
- may be included all those activities in which people do the identical function. For example, plying together, working together, carrying a load together or pulling the car out of mud together.

ii) Indirect Cooperation:

- Under indirect cooperation are included those activities in which people do unlike tasks together towards a common end.
- For example, when carpenters, plumbers and masons cooperate to build a house. This cooperation is based on the principle of the division of labour.

i) Primary Cooperation:

- This type of cooperation is found in primary groups such as the family. In this form, there is an identify of interests between the individuals and the group.
- **(ii) Secondary Cooperation:**
- Secondary cooperation is found in secondary groups such as Government, industry, trade union and church etc.
- For example, in an industry, each may work in cooperation with others for his own wages, salaries, promotion, profits and in some cases prestige and power.

(iii) Tertiary Cooperation:

- This type of cooperation is ground in the interaction between the various big and small groups to meet a particular situation.
- In it, the attitudes of the cooperating parties are purely opportunistic; the organisation of their cooperation is both loose and fragile.
- For example, two political parties with different ideologies may get united to defeat their rival party in an election.

Accommodation:

- Adjustment is the way of life. It can take place in two ways such as adaptation and accommodation.
- Adaptation refers to the process of biological adjustment.
- Accommodation, on the other hand, implies the process of social adjustment.

definition

- As Maclver and Page say, “the term accommodation refers particularly to the process in which man attains sense of harmony with his environment”.
- According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, “Accommodation is a term used by sociologist to describe the adjustment of hostile individuals or groups.”
- As Horton and Hunt defines “Accommodation Is a process of developing temporary working agreements between conflicting individuals or groups”.

Characteristics of accommodation

- **i) It is the End-result of Conflict:**
- **(ii) It is both Conscious and Unconscious Process:**
- **iii) It is a Universal Activity:**
- **(iv) It is a Continuous Process:**
- **(v) It is a Mixture of both Love and Hatred:**

Forms or Methods of Accommodation:

- **1. Admission of one's Defeat: yielding to coercion-** parties of unequal strength
- **2. Compromise:** parties are equal in power
- **3. Arbitration and Conciliation:** which involves attempts of the third party to resolve the conflict between the contending parties.
- **Arbitration:-**The decision of the third party is binding on both the parties
- **Mediation:-**Neutral agent –but advisory only
- Decision not binding

- **Conciliation**:-attempt to persuade the parties to come to an agreement
- **4. Toleration**: ‘Live & let Live policy’
- **5. Conversion**:- rejection of one’s beliefs and adoption of others
- **6. Sublimation**:- substitution of non-aggressive attitudes for aggressive ones
- Eg. Jesus, Gandhi- hatred by love
- **7.Rationalisation**:-Explanation for one’s behaviour

Importance of Accommodation:

- Accommodation is the way which **enable people to work together** whether they like it or not.
- Society can hardly go on without accommodation.
- Since conflict disturbs social integration, disrupts social order and damages social stability, accommodation is essentially essential **to check conflict and to maintain cooperation which is the sine qua non of social life.**

Assimilation:

- it is that process by which individuals belonging to different cultures are united into one.
- This implies the **complete merging and fusion** of two or more bodies into a single common body, a process analogous to digestion, in which we say that food is assimilated.
- Assimilation in social relationships means that the **cultural differences between divergent groupings of people disappear.**

- E.S. Bogardus: “Assimilation” “is a process whereby attitudes of many persons are united, and thus, develop into a united group”.
- Ogburn and Nimkoff :-
- “Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar, that it become identified in the interests and outlook”.

Characteristics of Assimilation:

- 1. **Associative process.**
- 2. **Universal process.** It is found in every place and at all times.
- 3. **Slow and gradual process.**
- 4. **Unconscious process**
- 5. **Two-way process.** It is based on the principle of give and take

Factors favouring Assimilation

- 1. **Toleration**:- helps people to come together, to develop contacts towards to participate in common social and cultural activities.
- 2. **Intimate social relationship**: Assimilation is the final product of social contacts
- 3. **Amalgamation or intermarriage**:-
- Without biological amalgamation complete assimilation is not possible. Mere intermixture of the groups to a limited degree does not guarantee assimilation. But intermarriage must be accepted in the mores and become a part of the institutional structure, before assimilation exists.

- **(4) Cultural similarity**
- **(5) Education**
- **(6) Equal social and economic opportunity:-**
- People of all groups must have equal access to socio-economic opportunities.

factors retarding or hindering assimilation

- **(1) Isolation:-** Not only physical isolation but even mental isolation retards assimilation.
- **(2) Physical or racial differences**
- Differences in physical appearance are often used as a means of discrimination.
- **(3) Cultural differences**
- **(4) Prejudice as a barrier to assimilation**
- **(5) Dominance and subordination**

Competition:

- It occurs whenever there is an insufficient supply of anything that human beings desire
- Ogburn and Nimkoff say that competition occurs when demand out turns supply.
- people compete for power, name, fame, glory, status, money, luxuries and other things which are not easily available. Since scarcity is in a sense an inevitable condition of social life, competition of some sort or the other is found in all the societies.

- According to Biesanz and Biesanz, “Competition is the striving of two or more persons for the same goal with is limited so that all cannot share it”.
- Park and Burgess write, “Competition is an interaction without social contact”.
- As E.S. Bogardus says. “Competition is a contest to obtain something which does not exist in quantity sufficient to meet the demand.”

Characteristics:

- **(i) It is Universal:**
- **(ii) It is Impersonal:**
- **lii) may be personal or impersonal**
- **lv) continuous**
- **v) a cause of social change**
- **vi) costructive or destructive**
- **vii unconscious also**

Forms of Competition

- **1. Economic Competition:**
- **2. Cultural Competition:**
- **3. Social Competition:** For acquiring a high status, popularity, name and fame in society people compete with each other
- **4. Racial Competition:**
- **5. Political Competition:**

Role of Competition:

- **i) Assignment of right individual to proper place:**
- **(ii) Source of motivation:**
- **(iii) Conducive to progress:**

Conflict:

- Conflict arises only when the **attention** of the competitors is diverted from the object of competition to themselves.
- As a process, **it is the anti-thesis of cooperation**. It is a process of seeking to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors.
- It is a deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others.

- J.H. Fitcher:- “Conflict is the social process in which individual or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or threat of violence”.
- A.W. Green:- “Conflict is the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others”.

Characteristics:

- **1. Conflict is a Conscious Activity:**
- Individuals and groups who are involved in conflict try to defeat each other consciously. It is a deliberate attempt to oppose. Everyone harms the other party knowingly.
- **2. Conflict is a Personal Activity:**
- The main objective is to defeat the opponent party. The conflicting parties personally know each other.

- **3. Conflict is intermittent:**
- Conflict is not a continuous process. It takes place occasionally. It occurs all on a sudden and comes to an end after sometime.
- **4. Conflict is Universal : (Marx)**
- **5. Conflict is Emotional:**
- The basis of conflict is emotion. Moved by excessive emotion, people get involved in conflict and in this process, they use fair as well as unfair means to achieve their goal.

Forms of conflict

- **1.Group or corporate conflict:**
- It takes place between two societies or groups within a society. When group loyalties and needs take precedence over personal individual feelings, it is group conflict. In such conflict, individual feelings become irrelevant.

- **Simmel (1955) has distinguished four types of conflict:**
- i) War;
- (ii) feud or fictional strife;
- (iii) litigation; and
- (iv) conflict of impersonal ideals

- **1. War:-** Simmel attributed war to a deep-seated antagonistic impulse in man. For him, antagonistic impulse is a foundation of all conflicts.
- **2. Feud:-** is an **intra-group** form of conflict which may arise because of injustice alleged to have been done by one group to the other.

- **3. Litigation** :- is a judicial form of conflict when an individual or group asserts its claims to certain rights on the basis of objective factors.
- **4. Conflict of impersonal ideals**:- is a conflict carried on by the individuals not for themselves **but for an ideal**. In such a conflict, each party attempts to justify truthfulness of its own ideals.

- **Gillin and Gillin (1948) have classified conflict in five groups:**
- (i) Personal conflict,
- (ii) racial conflict,
- (iii) class conflict,
- (iv) political conflict, and
- (v) international conflict.

Role (Functions) of Conflict:

- As other forms of social interaction, it has both positive and negative effects. Conflict both terminates and commences to serve the interests of man in society.

Horton and Hunt (1964) have distinguished the effects of conflict as under:

Integrative effects

Define issues.
Leads to resolution of issues.

Increases group cohesion.

Leads to alliance with other groups.

Keeps groups alert to members' interests.

Disintegrative effects

Increases bitterness.
Leads to destruction and bloodshed.

Leads to inter-group tension.

Disrupts normal channels of cooperation.

Diverts members' attention from group objectives.

1. Conflict determines the status of the individual in the social organization. Rivalry, war and other forms of personal struggle determine superiority and subordination of men and groups.

2. Conflict is not always an unmitigated evil everywhere as it is generally assumed. It is a chief means of group contact, and it has played an important role in the development and spread of culture.

3. Conflict may eventuate in peace through victory of one contestant over others.

4. Conflict helps to define social issues and brings about a new equilibrium of contending forces. It may lead to the working out of non-violent techniques for resolving crises. The end result of conflict is that the issues are resolved at least for a time.

5. Conflict tends to stiffen the morale, promotes unity and cohesion within the group and may lead to expanding alliances with other groups.

6. Conflict keeps groups alert to members' interests.

7. Conflict generates new norms and new institutions. It happens mostly in economic and technological realms.. It leads to redefinition of value systems.

8. Conflict within and between bureaucratic structures provides means of avoiding the ossification and ritualism which threatens their form of organization.

10. Conflict between vested interests and new strata and groups demanding share of power, wealth and status have proved to be productive of vitality.

11. Conflict may lead to a new consensus.

12. Conflict theorists (e.g., Coser, 1956) believe that conflict is necessary for progress. They contend that societies progress to a higher order only if oppressed groups improve their lot.

Dysfunctions of Conflict:

Conflicts, as we know, disrupts social unity. It is highly disturbing way of settling issues.

Conflict within a group makes it hard for members to agree on group goals or to co-operate in pursuit of them.

It often results in group tension. It increases bitterness and leads to destruction and bloodshed.

Conflict disrupts normal channels of co-operation. It diverts members' attention from group objectives.

Distinction between competition and Conflict:

- . Conflict takes place on a conscious level, competition is unconscious.
- ii. Conflict involves contact, competition does not.
- iii. Conflict may involve violence, competition is non-violent.
- iv. Conflict is personal, competition is impersonal activity.

- v. Conflict lacks continuity, competition is a continuous process.
- vi. Conflict disregards social norms, competition does care for norms.
- vii. Conflict diverts members attention from group objectives, competition keeps members alert to the goal or objective.

Isolation

- a state or process in which persons, groups, or cultures lose or do not have communication or cooperation with one another, often resulting in open conflict.
- **Social isolation** refers to a complete or near-complete lack of contact with people and society for members of a social species.