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BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS) IN SOCIOLOGY (BASO)

BSO-2

Introduction to Sociology-2

BLOCK-3

SOCIAL PROCESSES

**UNIT 1 MEANING, DEFINITION AND TYPES OF
SOCIAL PROCESSES**

**UNIT 2 ASSOCIATIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES:
COOPERATION, ASSIMILATION AND
ACCOMMODATION**

**UNIT 3 DISSOCIATIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES: CONFLICT
AND COMPETITION**

BLOCK 3 SOCIAL PROCESSES

The previous Block has discussed the study of social control - the means through which people are led to fill their roles as expected - begins with the study of social order within which people interact. Further, social control has been discussed in great detail as one of the mechanism of maintaining social order-how it operates as a whole, as a changing equilibrium. The present Block discusses the concept of social processes. It consists of three Units. **Unit 1** defines the meaning and characteristics of social processes. Associative social processes such as cooperation, assimilation and accommodation are discussed in **Unit 2**. Similarly, **Unit 3** denotes the dissociative social processes like conflict and competition and their features and this Unit also discusses the interrelationship among cooperation, conflict and competition and their relevance.

UNIT 1 MEANING, DEFINITION AND TYPES OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Objectives
- 1.3 Social Interaction and Social Processes: Meaning and Definition
 - 1.3.1 Social Contact
 - 1.3.2 Direct and Symbolic Interaction
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on three important aspects of management of individuals in a society. Every individual interacts with other individuals in order to survive. In the beginning the interaction is with parent or caretaker, later on with other individuals in the society. As interaction takes place there are cooperation, competition and conflicts emerging in these relationships. The term ‘social processes’ refers to repetitive forms of behaviour, which are commonly found in social life. One of the most extensive treatments of social processes is found in Park and Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (1921). This highly influential textbook of an earlier period is primarily devoted to the classification and analysis of social processes. In recent decades sociologists have become less interested in social processes themselves and more interested in intensive analysis of behaviour in specific institutional and cultural settings. Yet it remains important for students to be aware of the major social processes found in all groups and societies. The most frequent classification of major social processes is in terms of associative and dissociative social processes such as Cooperation, Accommodation, Assimilation, Competition and Conflict.

The present unit deals with the meaning and definition of the concept of social interaction and social process.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit seeks to help you to understand the nature and meaning of social processes, which are an integral part of our social behavior and interaction. After studying the unit you will be able to:

- explain the meaning and definition of social interaction and social process
- define and explain types of social Processes
- know the interrelationship between different types of social processes

1.3 SOCIAL INTERACTION AND SOCIAL PROCESS: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Much of the thinking about society is in terms of social relationships. One thinks of the relation between father and son, employer and employee, leader and follower, merchant and customer; or, of the relation between friends, between enemies, between children, etc. Such relationships are among the most obvious features of society and consequently it seems an elaboration of the obvious to inquire into their nature. Social relationship represents fundamental ways of organizing social data. In short, a society may be viewed, if one wishes, as a system of relationships.

In analyzing social relationships one soon finds them more complicated than they first appear. They involve *reciprocal obligations*, *reciprocal statuses*, and *reciprocal ends* and *means* between two or more actors in mutual contact. They refer to form or pattern of interaction between individuals.

Any society contains hundreds and perhaps thousands of socially defined relationships. The immediate family alone may contain as many as fifteen. How many relationships a society utilizes is simply a matter of how many criteria it takes into account in defining behaviour between individuals? The fifteen relationships of the immediate family rest on three criteria - age, sex and generation. Outside the family, an infinite number of criteria may be used, so there is no limit to the number of possible relationships.

It follows that to catalogue all the meaningful relationships in which human beings are involved would be a never-ending task. Instead, they may be classified and dealt with as general types. Any classification, however, must have some point to it. In social sciences, as in all sciences, classification is worthless unless it seizes upon traits that are significant, traits that facilitate causal analysis. For this reason, social relationships have been classified and discussed in terms of the **kind of interaction** they manifest. The most important kinds of interaction singled out for consideration here are conflict, competition and cooperation. Each of these has several sub-types, but mention of the main ones alone is enough to demonstrate that a proper understanding of the forms of interaction is essential to the understanding of society.

Social interaction by definition involves contact, and contact necessarily requires a material or sensory medium. It need not of course require the impingement of one body directly upon another, but it does require the occurrence of direct or indirect sensory stimulation between the interacting parties. The material medium, however,

is only a necessary, not a sufficient basis of contact. Individuals can be in material contact without being in social contact. For example, two tribes living on opposite sides of swamp and having nothing to do with each other may nevertheless be bitten by mosquitoes that continually carry malaria from one tribe to another. It is not merely physical contact that counts, but meaningful or symbolic contact. Good will may be expressed by either handshake or a spoken phrase, a letter or a smile. Added to the sensory stimulus is a meaningful stimulus. A dead man's will is an indirect and tenuous material link with his heirs, but its physical character is far less important than its meaning. Until material or sensory contact acquires meaning for the subjective selves of the persons concerned, it is not social in the human senses. The social behaviour of human beings consists of acquired responses to the meaningful responses of others. Human interaction in other words, is communicative interaction. The social behaviour of human beings consists of acquired responses to the meaningful responses of others. Human interaction, in other words, is communicative interaction.

The essential feature of communication is that one person infers from the behaviour of another (whether speech, gesture or posture) what idea or feeling the other person is trying to convey. He then reacts not to the behaviour as such but to the inferred idea or feeling. The other person then reacts to his response in terms of the idea or feeling—the meaning behind it. When a girl receives flowers she looks at them and smells them, but her main interest is in the person who sent them and why. Were they sent to end a quarrel, to mark an anniversary, to cement a promise, to say farewell, to brighten an illness? Unless she can answer such questions she will feel a loss, not knowing what to do. It is the meanings behind the behaviour that are involved in the system of mutual expectations previously described as being present in the interacting situation.

Each and every person is a social and cultural being. It is very difficult for people to live in isolation. Human beings always live in various groups and associations. They act and behave in a certain manner. In each and every moment, the behaviour of each individual is affected by the behaviour of others. This interaction is the essence of social life. Green defines social interaction as “the mutual influences that affects groups. Also these groups affect one another in their attempts to solve problems and in their striving towards goals”. According to Dawson and Gettys, “Social interaction is a process whereby men interpenetrate the minds of each other.” Gish defined social interaction as, “it is the reciprocal influence in which human beings exert on each other through inter stimulation and response.” Thus we can say that social interaction refers to the entire range of social relationships, wherein there is reciprocal stimulation and response between individuals.

Social interaction produces some definite influence upon social relations that exists among human beings. Two essential conditions of social interaction are:

- i) Social contact
- ii) Communication

It should now be clear that a significant classification of the kinds of interaction must

keep in view the meaningful character of social contact.

1.3.1 Social Contact

Social contact can be established through the medium of radio, letters, telephones and other media of communication. Social contact is the first and important phase of interaction. It may be positive or negative. If it is positive, they lead to cooperation, mutual understanding and assimilation. If it is negative, they create hatred, jealousy and conflict. The above forms of social interaction are termed as social processes. MacIver observes, “social process is the manner in which the relations of the members of a group, are brought together to acquire a certain distinctive character. According to Gillin and Gillin, “by social processes we mean those ways of interacting by which we can establish system of relationships or find out what happens when changes of relationships occur or what happens when changes disturb already existing modes of life.” In this context we can use three important terms, viz., cooperation, competition and conflict.

1.3.2 Direct and Symbolic Interaction

Interaction may be direct or symbolic. Direct interaction refers to the activities of a person which may be seen in such conduct of pushing, fighting, embracing etc. through bodily contact with other individuals. Symbolic interaction consists of vocal or other gestures and language, spoken or written. A symbol is a summary of experiences. It may represent a subject, or value or any expected response.

1.3.3 Inter-Stimulation and Response

Inter-stimulation and response constitute the central nature of interaction. One stimulates the actions, thoughts or emotions of another person and other responds accordingly. Interaction increases mental activity, fosters comparison of ideas, sets new tasks, accelerates and discovers the potentialities of the individual.

1.3.4 Importance of Social Interaction

The basic foundation of society is Social interaction. It is the most inclusive social process. Individual can't sustain in a society without interaction. Groups develop through interaction with other groups and disintegrate without some stimulation from outside. Society exists only when a large number of persons are interacting. Human interaction takes place in the context of social expectations, rules and norms. It is the process through which culture and structure develops and changes.

1.3.5 Communication

Social interaction requires essential communication. Besides this, communications are essential adjuncts of social contact. Language, gestures, symbols, radio, telephone, television, newspaper etc. are the media for communication. Human interaction is undoubtedly a communicative interaction. In this context, we can further say that social interaction usually takes place in the form of co-operation, competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation.

Cooperation means working together in the pursuit of a common interest. It is a joint activity. It is the conscious form of social interaction where two or more persons work together to gain a common end. Cooperation may be of different types. Cooperation for human beings is both a psychological and social necessity. On the other hand, competition is an unconscious, impersonal and continuous struggle between individuals and groups for satisfaction. It is a contest to obtain something which does not exist in a quantity sufficient to meet the demand.

Competition, like co-operation, is indispensable in social life. Competition performs many useful functions in society. At different levels, competition occurs. It may be economic, cultural, social, and political. There is no society which is exclusively competitive or exclusively cooperative. Besides competition and cooperation, conflict is another important process in human relations.

Conflict is a conscious action as well as personal activity. It lacks continuity but it is a universal phenomenon. Causes of conflict are mainly individual differences, cultural differences, clash of interest, social change etc. Besides this, conflict serves constructive and positive ends. Conflict has both integrative and disintegrative effects.

Interaction is a two-way process whereby each individual or group stimulates the other and in varying degrees modifies the behaviour of the participants. The behaviour and personality characteristics of individual members of a group affect the behaviour of others and make a significant impact over the functioning of a group as a whole. The behaviour of each individual is affected by the behaviour of other individual. This is known as interaction process and it is the essence of social life. According to Eldredge and Merrill, "social interaction is the general process whereby two or more persons are in meaningful contact as a result of which their behaviour is modified, however slightly." Social interaction refers to the entire range of social relationship, wherein there is reciprocal stimulation and response between individuals. Social interaction is of a dual nature, of persons with persons and of groups with groups. The main forms of social interaction are cooperation, competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation. Combinations of these are called social processes. Social interaction and social process are:

- i. Sequence of events
- ii. Repetition of events
- iii. Relationship between events
- iv. Continuity of events
- v. Special results.

Actually society is an arena where there is expression of different social processes. Social processes are fundamental to the life of a community. Society exists wherever several individuals are in reciprocal relationships. It constitutes an aggregation of individuals in a society. So we can say that there are two forms of social interaction i.e.

- i. conjunctive
- ii. disjunctive

Social contact initiates interaction. Social process is a variety of view-points. Social behaviour can be classified on the basis of - (a) their intrinsic nature, (b) the inherent drives, instincts, interests, desires etc. and (c) the observable behaviours upon which observers can agree. Social processes are merely the characteristic ways in which interaction occurs. People interact through social relationships which involve reciprocal obligations, reciprocal statuses and reciprocal ends and means. These social relationships can be examined by the pattern or mode of interaction. These kinds of interaction are called social processes.

Different sociologists defined social processes in different ways. A. W. Green defined social processes as merely the characteristic ways in which interaction occurs. According to Ginsberg, "social processes mean the various modes of interaction between individuals and groups including cooperation and conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay." According to Horton and Hunt, the term social process refers to the "repetitive forms of behavior which are commonly found in social life."

1.4 TYPES OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

We are concerned with two types of social processes such as associative social processes and dissociative social processes. Actually interaction occurs in the form of the above mentioned processes.

1.4.1 Associative Social Processes

Associative social processes are the social processes which work for the integration and development of society. The associative processes of social interaction are of positive type of interaction. The associative process is always worked for the integration and benefit of society. These processes bring progress and stability in society. Associative processes are also called as conjunctive processes. The associative processes include cooperation, accommodation, adaptation, adjustment, integration and assimilation. Here we shall discuss about three types of interaction. They are co-operation, assimilation and accommodation.

1.4.2 Dissociative Social Process

The processes that make special contribution towards social differentiation, antagonism and division are called dissociative processes. The dissociative processes of social interaction are of negative type of interaction.

These are also called disintegration of society. It hinders the progress and development of society. Sociologists say that these processes also strengthen the process of social solidarity. Adam Smith defined the role of competition in the economic activities of production, distribution and consumption. Similarly, the contribution of conflict in social structure has been systematically discussed, by Karl Marx, Coser, Dahrendorf, Park and Burgess. Competition, conflict and mutual opposition are included in dissociative processes.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1.1

Note:

- I. Use the space provided for your answer.
- II. Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q.1 Comment “social relationships are best described in terms of kinds of interaction” they manifest?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

The interactions – cooperation, competition and conflict are elementary, universal and fundamental form. Generally, social contact initiates interaction. Interaction refers to an action done in response to another action, but when this interaction through repetition leads to a result, then it is called a social process. The essential elements of social process are:

- sequence of events,
- repetition of events,
- relationship between events,
- continuity of events; and
- Special result

Not only this, there are some classification which classify social behaviour on the basis of (a) their intrinsic nature, (b) inherent drives, instincts, interests, drives and (c) the observable behaviour upon which observers can agree. In this context we are concerned with the fundamental types, i.e., cooperation, competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation.

1.6 GLOSSARY

- Attitude:** An enduring system of evaluations or feelings in favor of or against a person or group.
- Communication:** The exchange of meaning and mutual influence.
- Group:** Two or more people who interact and influence one another.
- Group dynamics:** The way in which changes take in the behaviour of other members of the group. Groups can mobilize powerful force which may be constructive or destructive.
- Interaction:** Interaction is a two-way process whereby each individual or group stimulates the other and in varying degrees which

modifies the behaviour of the participants.

Social cohesion: Degree to which group members share common beliefs, practices and values and thus act together.

Social distance: Degree to which individuals are willing to interact with people from different social background.

1.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q.1: Any society contains hundreds and perhaps thousands of socially defined relationships. The immediate family alone may contain as many as fifteen. How many relationships a society utilizes is simply a matter of how many criteria it takes into account in defining behaviour between individuals? The fifteen relationships of the immediate family rest on three criteria-age, sex and generation. Outside the family an infinite number of criteria may be used, so there is no limit to the number of possible relationships.

It follows that to catalogue all the meaningful relationships in which human beings are involved would be a never-ending task. Instead, they must be classified and dealt with as general types. Any classification, however, must have some point to it. In social sciences, as in all natural and physical sciences, classification is worthless unless it seizes upon traits that are significant traits that facilitate causal analysis. For this reasons, social relationships have been classified and discussed in terms of the *kind of interaction* they manifest.

1.8 REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 ASSOCIATIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES: COOPERATION, ASSIMILATION AND ACCOMMODATION

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Objectives
- 2.3 Cooperation: Meaning and Definition
 - 2.3.1 Characteristics of Cooperation
 - 2.3.2 Types of Cooperation
 - 2.3.3 Role of Cooperation
- 2.4 Assimilation: Meaning and Definition
 - 2.4.1 Characteristics of Assimilation
 - 2.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Assimilation
- 2.5 Accommodation: Meaning and Definition
 - 2.5.1 Characteristics of Accommodation
 - 2.5.2 Forms of Accommodation
 - 2.5.3 Need of Accommodation
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Glossary
- 2.8 Check Your Progress: Answer Keys
- 2.9 Model Questions
- 2.10 References

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on three important aspects of management of individuals in a society. Every individual interacts with other individuals in order to survive. In the beginning the interaction is with parent or caretaker, later on with other individuals in the society. As positive interaction takes place there are cooperation, assimilation and accommodation emerging in these relationships. The present unit deals with all these three aspects and points out their importance and functions and how individuals work through their cooperation, assimilation and accommodation so as to achieve their stipulated goals.

2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to;

- define and explain cooperation;
- describe about the social process of assimilation;
- term the process of accommodation.

2.3 COOPERATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Cooperation is an integrating activity and is believed to be the opposite of competition. The word “cooperation” is derived from the two Latin words “co” meaning together and “operari” meaning to work. It is thus a joint activity in pursuit of common goals or shared rewards. It is goal oriented and conscious form of social interaction. Actually it involves two elements – (i) common end and (ii) organized effort. It is the process by which individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organized way for the attainment of common objective. Generally co-operation means working together for a common objective. In many festivals, volunteers work together to collect money from different parts and want to organize the program successfully and everybody want to stretch forward their hands to celebrate the occasion successfully. Among the members of the group, there seems to be indication of good interaction process. All of them behave in co-operative manner. Co-operation is brought about by several factors which includes the following:

- a) desire for individual benefits
- b) desire to give and share
- c) total decision on common purposes
- d) situational necessity and
- e) desire to achieve larger goals

Cooperation implies a regard for the wishes of other people and is often regarded as unselfish, but human may also find that their selfish goals are best served by working together with their fellows.

According to Merrill and Eldredge, “cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end.” Similarly, A.W. 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.” Fairchild, “Cooperation is the process by which the individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organized way for the attainment of common objective.”

Thus, cooperation is a process of working together to achieve a common goal.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Cooperation

The important characteristics of cooperation are as follows:

- a. Cooperation is a conscious process where individuals or groups work together consciously with an aim.

- b. It is a personal process
- c. Cooperation is a continuous process without which society cannot develop.
- d. Cooperation is a universal process which is found in all groups and societies.

2.3.2 Types of Cooperation

We can classify cooperation into five categories, viz.

- i) Direct cooperation
- ii) Indirect cooperation
- iii) Primary cooperation
- iv) Secondary cooperation and
- v) Tertiary cooperation

i) **Direct Cooperation:**

The essential characteristics of this kind of cooperation are that people do in company the thing which can also do separately. In this category cooperating individuals do things of common interest together and perform identical functions. Playing together, worshipping together are the examples of direct co-operation. Under this category we include all those activities in which people do like things together-play together, worship together, till the fields together, labour together in myriad ways. In such activities, there may be minor diversities of task-you wash, will dry-but their essential character is that people do in each other's company the things which they can also do separately or in isolation. They do them together, either because the face-to-face situation is itself a stimulus to the performance of the task or because it brings some other social satisfaction. Direct cooperation is exemplified also when people perform together tasks that would be difficult for one of them to perform alone as when they pull together on a line or together storm a barricade.

ii) **Indirect Cooperation:**

In this type of cooperation individual work towards a common end each has his own specialized functions. Thus, we can say that indirect cooperation is obtained when people perform dissimilar tasks towards a common end, i.e., each has its specialized role to play. In the modern society it is the indirect cooperation which is more in play than the direct cooperation because technological changes require specialization of skills and functions. Under this category we include all those activities in which people do unlike tasks but directed towards a single end. Here the principle of the division of labour comes into play, a principle that is: embedded in the very nature of social life. The division of labour is revealed in the procreation of life in the upbringing of a family. It is revealed whenever people pool their differences or for common ends. In industry, in government, in scientific research, even in recreational activities, functions tend to become more and more specialized. This process is more manifest in urban than in rural life, but the disappearance of the "husking bees" and "thrashing rings" signal the fact the people have to satisfy in other ways the need for social stimulation formerly satisfied through direct co-operation.

The replacement of direct by indirect cooperation has accompanied our great technological advances, which clearly require specialization of skills and functions. But in terms of human needs, this is not all gain. It is often claimed that the individual of modern industrialized and urbanized society, increasingly separated from face-to-face co-operative modes of activity and more and more a "specialist" detached from close ties of intimate community life, tends to take on the highly individualized, neurotic characteristics as depicted by a growing number of writers.

iii) Primary Cooperation:

There is an identity of interest between the individual and the group. It is the cooperation which is found in primary groups such as family. Not only family but also peer groups is also called primary cooperation where people have to choose face-to-face relations. We can also say that interest of the individual merge with the interest of the primary group.

iv) Secondary Cooperation:

Secondary cooperation is the characteristic feature of the modern civilized society and is mainly found in secondary groups. It is highly formalized and specialized. Most of the members of a group feel some loyalty towards the group, but the welfare of the group is not their first consideration. This type of cooperation is generally found in the secondary group, viz., government, industry, church and trade union etc.

v) Tertiary Cooperation:

This is the interaction between various big and small group to meet a particular situation. Here the individual or group who wants to compete with one another, come together and cooperate with each other for a specific purpose. In such type of cooperation the attitudes of the cooperating parties are purely opportunistic. It may be found between two or more political parties, castes, tribes, religious groups etc.

2.3.3 Role of Cooperation

It is a universal phenomenon. Cooperation for human beings is both a psychological and social necessity. Individual as well as collective goals cannot be achieved without cooperation. Cooperation is essential for maintenance of social order. We cannot do anything without cooperation, if we are to live as members of the society. Family members cooperate with each other in terms of sharing economic, emotional and social requirements of one another. All the activity in each and every family is done in a cooperative way. People learn their first lesson in cooperation as members of the family. The physical, mental and even the spiritual needs of the individual remain unsatisfied if he does not agree to cooperate with his fellow members.

Cooperation helps society to progress. Progress in science and technology, agriculture and industry, transport and communication, etc would not have been possible without cooperation. Individuals who cooperate may generate unbounded enthusiasm. In democratic countries, cooperation has become a necessary condition of people's collective life and activities.

Within these common goals the members of the society have diverse individual and immediate goals or purposes. In the example of the farmer, wholesaler and retailer we have seen that the fulfillment of the individual goals is such that it enables the achievement of common goals. Individual goals are fulfilled in a way that common goals are fulfilled. In this process there is cooperation in society and the social life is maintained. Thus, we all work in such a way that our goals are fulfilled.

Through cooperation,

- The common goals are fulfilled and the many diverse individual goals also are fulfilled.
- It leads to social order and harmony.
- Cooperation maintains social and group identity.
- In this process the society perpetuates.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.1

Note:

- I. Write your answer in the space given below.
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit

Q.1 Define the process of cooperation. Discuss its types.

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2.4 ASSIMILATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Whenever groups meet, some mutual interchange or diffusion of culture takes place. Even groups who seek to prevent such diffusion do not fully succeed in protecting their culture from all cultural interchange. This process of mutual cultural diffusion through which persons and groups come to share a common culture is called assimilation. It is always a two-way process with each group contributing varying proportions of the eventual blend, depending upon respective group size, prestige and other factors. It is a form of social adjustment. It is concerned with the absorption incorporation of the culture by another.

According to Young and Mack, “Assimilation is the fusion or blending of two previously distinct groups into one”.

Similarly Bogardus stated, “Assimilation is the social process whereby attitudes of many persons are united, and thus develop into a united group”.

Ogburn and Nimkoff cited, “Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar and identified in their interest and outlook”.

Biesanz said, "Assimilation is the social process whereby individuals or groups come to share the same sentiments and goals".

The assimilation process is nicely illustrated in the Americanization of European immigrants. Arriving in great numbers between 1850 and 1913, many of them settled, in immigrant colonies in the Northern cities. Within these ethnic colonies-Little Italy, Little Poland and so on-they practiced much of their native European culture while absorbing some of the American culture. The immigrant parents often sought to transmit European culture to their children, while the children generally sought to become American as rapidly as possible. This conflict often caused parental anguish, family disorganization, and loss of parental care, so that many second-generation immigrants became confused, rebellious and delinquent. As the third generation matured, the assimilation difficulties generally subsided; Americanization became fairly complete, and the ethnic colony disappeared as the descendants scattered over city and suburb (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1927).

Assimilation reduces group conflicts by blending differing groups into larger, culturally homogenous groups. The bitter riots against the Irish and the discrimination against Scandinavians in the United States have disappeared as assimilation has erased the group differences and blurred the sense of separate group identity. Anything, which binds people into a larger group, will tend to reduce rivalry and conflict between them. This is strikingly illustrated by an experiment, which involved the experimental formation of different groupings at a summer camp (Sherif and Sherif, 1953). The boys were all from the same community and were similar in religion, social class, status, age and national background. For the first experimental period they were treated as single group, and they showed no signs of incipient social conflict. In the second experimental period they were divided into two groups who were housed separately and encouraged to develop separate programmes of activities. The groups took the names of "Red Devils" and "Bull Dogs." Group antagonism quickly developed and physical violence between the groups reached the point where it had to be suppressed by the adult leaders.

This experiment shows how, even when there are no real differences or issues to fight over, conflict tends to develop wherever separate group identity is recognized. Assimilation removes, some but not all possible pressures toward conflict.

2.4.1 Characteristics of Assimilation

Following the important characteristics of assimilation;

- i) Assimilation is a slow and gradual process. It occurs only when there is relatively continuous and direct contact. The speed of the process of assimilation depends upon the nature of direct contacts. Secondary and superficial assimilation occurs very slowly compared to primary assimilation.
- ii) Assimilation is a two-way process. It involves the principle of give and take. Individuals or groups incorporate cultural elements from other groups.
- iii) It is an unconscious process. In the process of assimilation, the individual and group is usually unconscious of what is taking place. Mostly in an

unconsciousness manner, individuals and groups discard their original cultural heritage and substitute it with the new one.

- iv) It is not confined to a single field only. It is applied to explain the fusion of two distinct cultural groups.

2.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Assimilation

Advantages

- i) Tolerance helps the individuals to close together and helps to develop contacts to achieve a common goal. The process of assimilation can be possible when people become tolerant towards cultural difference among themselves. People from different cultures get the opportunity to participate and work together for the betterment of the society.
- ii) Assimilation develops and strengthens social relationships. It can be possible through direct and personal relationships in primary groups like family and peer groups.
- iii) Assimilation is the amalgamation of intermarriage of different groups. Through this amalgamation, different groups come together to work.
- iv) Assimilation helps to discard the differences in cultural and ethnic identity and people become more functional.

Disadvantages

- i) Besides advantages, it has certain disadvantages too. Individuals and groups may lean towards to accept other cultures which may not fit with the mainstream culture.
- ii) Assimilation can bring the loss of identity as different cultural groups lose their individual culture in the process.
- iii) Assimilation can be the product of several social problems such as trafficking.

2.5 ACCOMMODATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Accommodation is resolution of conflicts which means adjusting oneself to the new environment. Accommodation denotes acquired changes in the behaviour of their environment. The famous psychologist J. M. Baldwin was the first to use the concept of accommodation. To him, the term denotes acquired changes in the behavior of individuals which help them to adjust to the environment. According to MacIver, “the term accommodation refers particularly to the process on which man attains a sense of harmony with his environments”. Besides this, as a process, accommodation is the sequence of steps by which persons are reconciled to changed conditions of life through the formation of the changed conditions themselves. Accommodation is a term used by the sociologists to describe the adjustment of hostile individuals or groups. Accommodation is the process by which the individuals and groups make the necessary internal adjustments to social situation which have been created by competition and conflict. Accommodation is associated with the social order that is fixed and established in custom and the mores. Assimilation implies a more thorough

going transformation of the personality – transformation which takes place gradually under the influence of social contacts of the most concrete and intimate sort. Lundberg defines that “the word accommodation has been used to designate the adjustments which people in groups make to relieve the fatigue and tensions of competition and conflict”. Similarly, Ogburn and Nimkoff, “accommodation is a concept, used to explain the adjustment to unreceptive individuals and groups”.

2.5.1 Characteristics of Accommodation

- i) The associative social process of accommodation is the result of dissociative process of conflict. When conflict arises among the individuals or groups, to avoid the conflict situation, they go for settlement which is called accommodation. It may be permanent or temporary.
- ii) It is a form of adjustment. The differences between the individuals and groups exist, but these differences are accepted.
- iii) Thus, conflict may exist in a latent manner. At an overt level it is contained.
- iv) Accommodation is also a built-in mechanism of a society. There are many different patterns of behaviour and subcultures in the society. Culture trains its members to accommodate and continue without much friction. An example is the family where the various members carry on with the family life despite the many differences in the individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the members. Accommodation, thus, can be subconscious.
- v) It may also be a deliberate exercise as in arbitration, mediation, and conciliation of which we will learn while discussing the various types.
- vi) It is a universal and a continuous process.

2.5.2 Forms of Accommodation

i) Yielding to coercion

When the parties are of unequal strength, the weaker party submits to the demands and interests of the stronger party. This happens when the weaker party is not in any position to resist the stronger party. This is coercive accommodation.

ii) Compromise

It is giving up of part of the demands by the conflicting parties. In the process, each party can accommodate the demands of the other party. Usually, this happens when both the parties are almost of equal strength.

iii) Third party intervention

Third party intervention may take the forms of arbitration, mediation and conciliation. While in arbitration the decision of the arbitrator, i.e. the third party, is binding, in mediation the decision of the third party is not binding upon the contending parties. In conciliation, the third party seeks to create conditions where the contending parties themselves can arrive at an agreement.

iv) Toleration

This is a form of coexistence with differences. The conflicting parties accept each other's differences. This is also a kind of avoidance, where the conflicting grounds are avoided. Settlement of differences and arriving at a resolution are yet to take place. Sometimes, differences may become too complex to resolve by agreement and compromise. In such situations individuals and groups might simply avoid the conflicting aspects. This is toleration.

v) Conversion

In this type, one of the conflicting parties adopts the views of the other. In such a situation the conflict is resolved.

2.5.3 Need of Accommodation

- a) Accommodation is an integral social process. There is the existence of various kinds of status and role, the different types of social relationships, different interests, values and goals in society. All these together comprise social life. Conflict is latent (hidden) in a society. At the same time, the process of socialization trains the individuals and groups to play the various roles and interact mutually. Thus, the individuals and groups are trained to mutually orient one's behaviour to that of others. This means recognizing and accepting the differences, i.e. accommodation. In the example of the family given above we have already seen that people accommodate with each other. This keeps potential conflict from becoming overt (open). Accommodation makes possible social relations and, thus, social life.
- b) These different varieties may at times lead to a situation of overt conflict. A society cannot continue for long with overt conflict, so various processes come to operate to contain overt conflict. Accommodation is one such process. In such situations accommodation comes to occur after conflict occurs. It contains overt conflict in a manner that the opponent is not destroyed.
- c) By keeping conflict from becoming overt and containing conflict after it becomes overt, accommodation makes possible group life, continuity of society and enables cooperation and also competition in a manner that social life becomes possible.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.2

Note:

- I. Write your answer in the space given below.
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit

Q.2 Explain the meaning of the term assimilation and how it is used for reducing conflict situation?

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Q.3 Match the following.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| (i) Cooperation | (a) opposition of goals |
| (ii) Accommodation | (b) Working together towards a common goal |
| | (c) adjusting with differences |

2.6 LET US SUM UP

Associative social processes discussed above are found in all the societies, although there is great variation in emphasis. People come together in groups to socialize to get things done, or because they require doing so. Much of what we accomplish as individuals and as groups depends on our ability to get others to work with us on common tasks and for mutually acceptable goals. Cooperation may be personal or impersonal, deliberate or symbiotic in character. Primary groups demand highly personalized cooperation; secondary- group cooperation is found in most organized social groups. Group functions may be centralized or decentralized, may be simple or complex. But what we are referring to is the process known as cooperation – working together for mutually acceptable goals. Cooperation may involve merely our participation in a set of mutually understood role behaviours. The kind of cooperation that takes place between individuals occupying positions of unequal power and status actually amounts to obedience or compliance. Cooperation at a more advanced level may take place in problem-solving situations – situations that have a relatively high degree of ambiguity and a low degree of structural or predictability. Assimilation and accommodation is also one mechanism of reducing conflict or adjusting with opposite culture group through fusion of two cultures.

2.7 GLOSSARY

Accommodation: the process whereby an individual or group from one culture adjust with other from different culture.

Assimilation: the process by which an individual or group takes on the characteristics of the dominant culture.

Cooperation: Cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end. It is the process by which individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organized way for the attainment of common objective.

Social cohesion: degree to which group members share common beliefs, practices and values and thus act together.

2.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q.1: According to Merrill and Eldredge, “cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end.” There are five types of cooperation such as direct cooperation, indirect cooperation, primary cooperation, secondary cooperation and tertiary cooperation.

Answer to Q.2: Whenever groups meet, some mutual interchange or diffusion of culture takes place. Even groups which seek to prevent such diffusion do not fully succeed in protecting their culture from all cultural interchange. This process of mutual cultural diffusion through which persons and groups come to share a common culture is called assimilation.

Assimilation reduces group conflicts by blending differing groups into larger, culturally homogenous groups. Anything, which binds people into a larger group, will tend to reduce rivalry and conflict between them.

Answer to Q.3: (i) Cooperation (b) Working together towards a common goal
(ii) Accommodation (c) adjusting with differences

2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Elucidate briefly about cooperation.

Q.2: Define Assimilation and accommodation

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: What is associative social process? Discuss its types.

2.10 REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 DISSOCIATIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES: CONFLICT AND COMPETITION

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Objectives
- 3.3 Conflict: Meaning and Definition
 - 3.3.1 Characteristics of Conflict
 - 3.3.2 Causes of Conflict
 - 3.3.3 Types of Conflict
 - 3.3.4 Mechanisms to Deal with Conflict
- 3.4 Competition: Meaning and Definition
 - 3.4.1 Characteristics of Competition
 - 3.4.2 Types of Competition
 - 3.4.3 Variability of Competition
 - 3.4.4 Competition in a Contemporary Society
- 3.5 Cooperation, Conflict and Competition: Interrelations and Relevance
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Glossary
- 3.8 Check Your Progress: Answer Keys
- 3.9 Model Questions
- 3.10 References

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As we have learnt earlier, the members of society play their roles. In this process of role playing they interact among themselves. This is social interaction. It is dyadic in the sense that, for social interaction to occur there should at least be two persons involved. In the previous Unit, we have learnt different kinds of associative social processes such as cooperation, assimilation and accommodation. In the present Unit, we will discuss different types of dissociative social processes like conflict and competition.

3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to;

- understand the meaning and characteristics of conflict
- Analyze the causes and types of conflict
- explain the social process of competition
- discuss the role of competition in contemporary society

3.3 CONFLICT: MEANING AND DEFINITION

The conflict process is little praised but widely practiced. It develops whenever a person or group seeks to gain a reward not by surpassing other competitors, but by preventing them from effectively competing. It is formally defined *as the process of seeking to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors.*

Conflict is an ever-present process in human relations. It may be solved at one level as when there is agreement on ends and break out afresh over the question of means. You may raise a profound question as to why conflict is such a constant feature of human society. The answer lies in the basic nature of human society. Human society is not a tightly compressed affair but instead has a loose integration. The integration is not on a biological but on a mental level. It must be renewed and maintained constantly through psychological processes such as indoctrination, inspiration and repetition. It must somehow rest on the possession of common and extra-personal ends on the part of its members. These ends cannot come from man's biological but only from communicative contact with his fellows. Accordingly therefore they differ greatly from one society to another because they are associated with differences of culture. This, then, gives first basis of conflict - ethnocentrism - the dislike of people with different culture and different ultimate ends from one's own. Those with the same set of ultimate ends cling together and identify themselves with one another, while those with a different set of ends also do the same. A social group, furthermore, has a corporate character a name, a common leadership, a determinate structure, a sense of familiarity. Individuals identify themselves with this corporate entity and conceive their ultimate duty as loyalty to it, whether it be a clan, a tribe, a city-state, a religious sect, or a nation.

Conflict is a conscious action. It is a deliberate intent to oppose. We can say that conflict is universal. Not only this, conflict lacks continuity. Besides this, it is a personal activity. According to Gillin and Gillin, "Conflict is the social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends up directly challenging the antagonist by violence or threat of violence." Green defined, "Conflict is the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist and coerce the will of another or others." Conflict is a competition in its more occasional, personal and hostile forms. It is a process of seeking to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors. It is inherent in every society or social system. Conflict is apparently noted when an individual or a group seeks to attain its own end. Conflict is the opposite of cooperation. Conflict may lead to antagonism, violence or threat to peace. Conflict is also regarded as non-associative social process.

3.3.1 Characteristics of Conflict

The characteristics of conflicts are;

- Although conflict is universal but it's nature vary from society to society. No society is characterized exclusively by conflict.
- Conflict is a conscious action. To achieve the respective goals the members oppose one another.

- Conflict leads to social change. It is mainly an expression of disequilibrium.
- It primarily remains personal activity. Sometimes it acquires greater intensity and involves many people. At first, it is manifested at the level of a particular group but ultimately it involves the entire society.
- Asymmetrical social, political and economic relations coupled with the sense of relative deprivation as the root cause of social conflict.
- Sometimes conflict is the life of society and progress emerges from a struggle in which each individual, class or institution seeks to realize its own idea of good.
- We the people are organized into groups to seek a common goal, the probability of conflict increases.
- All conflicts are not the same.
- We face conflicts on all levels as we have disagreements with family, friends and co-workers.
- Conflict is an ever-present process in human relations.
- Unmanaged conflict is a threat to the survival of the group and ultimately tends to make the group less effective.
- Conflict can occur within groups (intra-group conflict) and among groups (inter-group conflict).

3.3.2 Causes of Conflict

According to Freud and some other psychologists, the innate instinct for aggression in man is the main cause of conflicts. Generally it arises from a clash of interest within groups and societies and between groups and societies. The significant causes are:

- i) **Individual difference** – It is true that, we, the human being, are not alike by nature, attributes, interests, personalities etc. These differences may lead to conflict among the human being.
- ii) **Cultural differences** – The culture of a group differs from the culture of the other group. The cultural differences among the groups sometimes cause tension and lead to conflict.
- iii) **Differences of opinion regarding interest** – In fact, the interests of different people or groups occasionally clash. For example we can say that interests of the employers and employees vary in much respect which may ultimately leads to conflict among them.
- iv) **Social change** – Social changes occur off and on in each and every society. Conflict is an expression of social disequilibrium. Social change is the cultural log which leads to conflict.

3.3.3 Types of Conflict

Conflict expresses itself in numerous ways and in various degrees and over every range of human contact. Its modes are always changing with changing social and cultural conditions. "Social Conflict" includes all activity in which men contend *against one another* for any objective. Its two fundamental types are direct and indirect conflict.

- i) **Direct Conflict:** When individuals or groups thwart or impede or restrain or injure or destroy one another in an effort to attain some goal, direct conflict occurs. Milder thwarting or frustration of goal attainment is involved in such forms as litigation, polemic, propagandistic activity and much of the struggle of the organized economic groups for larger stakes.
- ii) **Indirect Conflict:** When individuals or groups do not actually impede the efforts of one another but nevertheless seek to attain their ends in ways which obstruct the attainment of the same ends by others, indirect conflict occurs. Competition is impersonal conflict between individuals for attainment of any objects of desire that are limited in supply, whether income or academic honours or beautiful women for social prestige. The competition does not as such directly interfere with the efforts of another to attain such goals but only indirectly with the other person's success.

In distinguishing these two forms, the reader should note that not all struggles in which man is engaged is social conflict of either type. We are struggling to master difficulties, to overcome obstacles, to achieve ends in ways other than through conflict with our fellows. Man's "battle" with the physical environment is a case in point. Social conflict, man against man or group against group, reveals itself wherever there is society. But unless co-operation penetrates deeper than conflict, society cannot endure.

3.3.4 Mechanisms to Deal with Conflict

There are of course social mechanisms that smoothen conflict. One of these is humour, which removes the tension that might otherwise expend itself in physical violence. Another is social distance or avoidance. A third is sentiment formation, which overcomes the conflict of interests of the antagonistic parties. A fourth is variety, and change, for an existing situation is more tolerable if it is known that it will not last long. A fifth is organized rivalry, which provides an opportunity for simulated battle, for intense group loyalty, for the manifestation of prowess in vanquishing others, and yet because the interaction has a set form and definite conclusion, it allows the energies to be expended either harmlessly or to the advantage of the society.

It is clear however that such mechanisms are not universally successful. Humor social distance, noble sentiments, social change, organized rivalry - these may on occasion provoke rather than prevent conflict. The truth is that there are elements of conflict in all situations, because the ends of different individuals are always to some extent mutually exclusive. Conflict is a part of human society because of the kind of entity that human society is.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3.1

Note:

- I. Use the Space provided for your answer.
- II. Check your answers with the model answers provided at the end of this unit.

Q.1 Explain meaning of term 'conflict' in your own words and discuss why it is ever present in human society?

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3.4 COMPETITION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

In contrast to conflict, which aims to destroy or do away with the opponent, competition simply aims to, out-do the competitor in achieving some mutually desired goal. It is thus a modified form of struggle. It implies that there are rules of the game to which the competitors must conform and that behind these rules, justifying and maintaining them, is a common set of values superior to the competitive interest. It also implies an absence of coercion. The rules are so arranged that the ends must be obtained by other methods than fraud or physical force. Consider an example: if a chain stores take business away from the local merchants by offering goods at cheaper prices that is competition. If on the other hand, the small merchants induce the government to tax the chain stores out of existence that is not competition because state is then exercising its power of coercion. The rules of competition limit the means that may be used to gain the competitive end; they tend especially to eliminate force and fraud. When competition breaks through the rules it transforms itself into conflict.

Competition is the struggle for possession of rewards, which are in limited supply: money, goods, status, power, and love- anything. It may be formally defined as the process of seeking to obtain a reward by surpassing other rivals. While competition is present to some degree in all the societies, it differs greatly in degree from society to society. The fiercely competitive Kwakiutl and the relatively non-competitive Zuni offer a striking contrast. The Kwakiutl work very hard to accumulate wealth, which is used primarily to establish status rather than to provide material comfort. The competition for status reaches its height at the famous "potlatch," in which the chiefs and leading families come with each other to see how much they can give away or destroy. A family may spend lifetime accumulating wealth, then bankrupt themselves in a single potlatch, thereby establishing the social status of their children. Members of a family who persisted in keeping their wealth would be criticized for their unwillingness to do "anything" for their children. The Zuni on the other hand, disdain any emphasis on the accumulation of wealth or the demonstration of individual skill. Most wealth is owned by the entire community and it is bad to demonstrate individual superiority of any kind. Thus the Zuni child does not grow up believing that he should

make the most money, get the highest grades or run the fastest race.

Even such strong encouragement of competition as is found among the Kwakiutl does not mean that cooperation is completely absent. As the anthropologist Margaret Mead points out-

Nevertheless, no society is exclusively competitive or exclusively cooperative. The very existence of highly competitive groups implies cooperation within the groups. Both competitive and cooperative habits must exist within the society.

Competition is the most important form of social struggle. According to Anderson and Parker, "Competition is that form of social action in which we strive against each other for the possession of or use of some limited material and non-material goods." According to Sutherland, Woodward and Maxwell, "Competition is an impersonal, unconscious continuous struggle which, because of their limited supply, all may not have." Competition is a form of interaction. It is the struggle for position to gain economic status. It occurs whenever there is an insufficient supply of anything that human being desire - insufficient in the sense that all cannot have as much of it as they wish. Sometimes competition happens because of limited supply and also difficult for equal distribution

3.4.1 Characteristics of Competition

The characteristics of competition are:

- Competition is impersonal struggle. Park and Burgess defined competition as "interaction without social contact." We can say it is inter-individual struggle that is impersonal. It is usually not directed against any individual or group in particular.
- Competition is universal. There is no society which is devoid of competition. Not only this, degree of competition may vary from society to society. It is very common for society as well as culture.
- Competition is considered as conducive to progress. Competition provides the individuals better opportunities to satisfy their desires for new experiences and recognitions.
- Both associative and non-associative dimensions of social processes indicate competition.
- Competition is mainly an unconscious activity but personal competition or rivalry is a conscious activity.
- Competition may create emotional disturbances.
- Competition is an innate tendency.
- Competition is a social phenomenon.
- Degree of competition is determined by social values and social structure.

3.4.2 Types of Competition

Three types of competition have been given by Bernard. These are as follows.

a) Economic Competition

This type includes competition for economic benefits as jobs, salaries, promotion and competition in the market as among the producers, among the sellers, etc.

b) Political Competition

This is competition for political power between individuals and groups. In democratic societies also we find the prevalence of this type of competition. The political parties compete among themselves to form the government.

c) Social Competition

Competition to improve ones' social position is social competition. It can be achieved through economic, political, religious and other means. Possessing of formal degrees in various spheres of education, or having a well-paid job and economic benefits may raise a person's social status in society. Competition to improve one's social status could be a motivating factor for the other kinds of competition.

3.4.3 Variability of Competition

An essential part of any social system, competition varies as to *scope*, *intensity* and *type* from one system to another system. Soviet Russia has plenty of competition. So does the United States but in a different way. The American variety has molded the economic institutions of private property, contract and the open market, the political institutions of representative government. These not only define the type of competition but give it great scope as well. They open the door to the pursuit of wealth through entrepreneurial ability.

3.4.4 Competition in a Contemporary Society

Competition is indispensable in social life. Competition performs many powerful functions in society. Sometimes competition is extremely dynamic. It performs five positive functions.

- It helps to determine the status and location of individual members in a system of hierarchy.
- It tends to stimulate economy, efficiency and inventiveness.
- It tends to enhance one's ego.
- It prevents undue concentration of power in an individual or group of individuals.
- It creates respect for the rules of the same group.

We can say that competition determines who is to perform what function. According to Ross, "Competition performs that broad function of assigning to each individual in his social world. Competition is a progressive force which fulfills and does not necessarily destroy." We can further say that fair competition is conducive to economic as well as social progress. Competition provides the individuals better opportunities to satisfy their desires for new experiences and recognition. It believes in achieved status. Sometimes competition has some negative function. It may lead to frustration. It may lead to monopoly. It may lead to conflict. It may create emotional

disturbances. It may develop unfriendly and unfavorable attitudes among the persons or groups toward one another. It is true that unfair competition has the most disintegrating effects. Sometimes unlimited competition leads to monopoly.

Competition is extremely dynamic. It stimulates achievement by lifting the level of aspiration, by threatening failure as well as promising success, and by adding an element of rivalry. For this reason, it becomes particularly strong in complex and changing societies. Present day society is characterized by excessive amount of competition. Today man overlooks the institutions and rules, which alone make competition to work- the protection of property, the enforcement of contracts, the prevention of fraud. He overlooks the common ends and values which are not competitive but which are superior to those that are. He forgets that competition can be vicious as well as beneficent, that it can lead to starvation in the midst of plenty, to fear and insecurity, to instability and panic. Today we have forgotten that unlimited competition leads inevitably to monopoly, that the very success of strong leads to gigantic power over the weak and creates such inequality that a mockery is made of free contract.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3.2

Note:

- I. Use the space provided for your answer.
- II. Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q.2 What do you understand by term Competition and how it is different from conflict?

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Q.3 Discuss the nature of competition in contemporary society?

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**3.5 COOPERATION, CONFLICT AND COMPETITION:
INTERRELATIONS AND RELEVANCE**

1. The Interrelation of the Forms of Interaction

It should be clear that the forms of interaction discussed here-conflict, competition and cooperation-are all interdependent. They are ever-present aspects of human society. Any social system, in fact any concrete situation, will manifest all three in a complex and intertwined manner. There is no cooperating group, no matter how

harmonious, which will not contain the seeds of suppressed conflict. There is no conflict, no matter how bitter, which will not have some hidden basis of compromise. There is no competition, no matter how impersonal and ruthless, which cannot claim some contribution to a larger cooperative cause.

Co-operation is commonly believed to be the opposite of competition. This is not true if it means that in a given situation one necessarily excludes the other. A cooperating group is one that is working together to accomplish a goal that all desire. In many cases it is realized that competition will aid the attainment of this goal and so a system of competition is allowed or deliberately instituted. The Soviet government learnt early in its history that competition for high pay has a stimulating effect on productivity. Since Russia's great need was to increase production by leaps and bounds, it developed an ingenious system of "socialist competition".

Unless competition enhances the overall goal of the society it will find critics aplenty. So long as it is controlled and institutionalized, it is presumably a means by which the cooperation of all is accomplished. In reality it is conflict rather than competition that is the opposite of cooperation. Yet cooperation may occur without making internal use of competition and between two competitors the overarching elements of cooperation may be lost from sight. In fact, each of two competitors trying to outstrip each other may view his organization as cooperating within itself but not cooperating at all with the other organizations. Often, therefore the ultimate cooperative effect of competition escapes awareness; the closer and more intimate cooperation of the organized group is the center of attention. This is what gives the illusion that competition and cooperation are necessarily opposed.

It should also be clear that any analysis of social behaviour in terms of the forms of interaction is an indispensable mode of approaching social phenomenon. Cooperation is the basic form of human interaction in which men strive jointly with each other for a good goal. Competition as a form of interaction occurs when two or more persons or groups struggle for some goal. Conflict takes the form of emotionalised and violent opposition in which the major concern is to overcome the opponent as a means of securing a given goal or reward.

It is direct and openly antagonistic struggle of persons or groups for the same object or end, cooperation is an associative process, while competition and conflict are dissociative processes. Competition and conflict divide men. But competition differs from conflict in that the former is impersonal, while the latter is personalised competition in a less violent form of struggle than conflict.

The three forms of interaction thus appear to be distinct and separate. In reality, however, cooperation, conflict and competition are interrelated. They are ever-present processes in human relations. They are not separable things but phases of one process which involves something of each.

According to Cooley, conflict and cooperation are not separable things, but phases of one process which always involves something of both. Even in the most friendly

relations and in the most intimate associations there is some point where interest diverge. They cannot therefore cooperate beyond that point and conflict is inevitable. The closest cooperation, for instance, within the family does not prevent the occurrence of quarrels.

Cooperation exists between men when their interests remain harmonious. But according to Davis, there is no group whether family or the friendly group which will not contain the seeds of suppressed conflict. Elements of conflict exist in all situations, because the ends which different individuals try to attain are always to some extent mutually exclusive.

Conflict also involves cooperation. In very conflict, there is some hidden basis of compromise or adjustment. For example, enemies in wartime cooperate under certain rules while they proceed to annihilate each other with the accepted modes and weapons of war. As end-result of conflict, there emerge arrangements and agreements which give rise to cooperation. In human society, however, most conflict ends in some sort of arrangement or accommodation or in the fusion of the two opposing elements. There is no competition which will not contain the seeds of conflict. As competition becomes more personal, it shades into conflict. Conflict does not always occur when competition become acute. It only happens if attitudes of the competitors become personal and hostile toward one another.

But every competition will contain such attitudes, though suppressed. An individual wishes not only to win the prize but beat another individual. Each knows that he can win the prize only by defeating the other. When competition becomes personalised in this way and becomes keener, hostility between the competitors easily develops.

Competition also involves cooperation. A competitive struggle implies some agreement among the competitors. Members of football teams compete according to rules prescribed for them.

The interrelations between three processes have been stated by Giddings in following ways. In a given region, with specific physiographic characteristics, including food supplies, an 'area of characterization' is formed ; and human being dwelling intend to become increasingly alike', and to develop solidarity on the basis of 'consciousness of kind'. In this way, says Giddings, The first two conditions of social life... namely grouping and substantial resemblance are provided.

But since they are alike, individuals living together in one habitat compete with each other in obtaining things which each is able to get by his own effort, and they combine their effort obtain things that no one can get without the help of others.

Whatever happens, their interests and activities are not wholly harmonious and easily become antagonistic. Competition tends to endanger conflict inimical to group solidarity. Eventually, says Giddings, equilibrium of 'live and let live' is arrived at, which makes conscious association possible for human beings.

2. Cooperation, Competition and Conflict: Interrelations and Differences

Cooperation and competition are the two basic forms of social processes which are fundamental for the existence of human society. Both play important role in the functioning of the society. Both are considered as the two sides of the same coin. No such society is exclusively cooperative or competitive. Both cooperation and competition have their own advantages. According to Ross, the form of social stratification also influences the relative cooperativeness and competitiveness of the societies. Competition brings an open-class and rapid changing society which is a positive nature of the competition. For example, in India, democratic political system encourages competition more than the totalitarian system. Healthy competition helps not only the individuals but also makes the society to move towards progress and development. It provides the society stability and change. Besides all these positive aspects, both have certain differences:

1. Cooperation is a form of associative social processes where two or more people work together to achieve a common goal, similarly competition is a dissociative social process where two or more individuals struggle for goal or end and conflict seeks reward by weakening or destroying the other competitors.
2. Cooperation brings positive results whereas competition brings both positive and negative results. Conflict only brings negative results. It harms and makes the society to move towards destruction.
3. Cooperation has no boundaries. But competition has its own limitations. It is bound by social norms.
4. C.H Cooley stated that cooperation has certain features like kindness, sympathy and mutual understanding, whereas competition has negative qualities like strong aspiration to get something, the readiness to suffer and struggle.
5. Cooperation brings satisfaction and contentment but competition may cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction, anxiety, uncertainties.
6. Cooperation is of various types like primary, secondary, tertiary whereas conflict can be said as class conflict, group conflict, religious or cultural or caste conflicts.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

This Unit has discussed about the dissociative social processes such as conflict and competition. Conflict develops when attention shifts from the contest itself to an effort to eliminate rivals. Different mechanisms of eliminating social conflict have been discussed in preceding pages. Assimilation is also one mechanism of reducing conflict between two conflicting groups through fusion of two cultures.

Competition serves the function of allocating scarce rewards among the competitors. It has the additional function of stimulating both individual and group activity in a manner to increase the total productivity, but it also discourages the efforts of those who regularly fail.

Traditional societies are likely to be less competitive than urban, industrialized societies. Life in urbanized societies offers many opportunities, large or small, to prove oneself competitively. Today we are much concerned about involving people throughout the world in large-scale problem-solving. The problems of the world – health, education, peace and war, preservation of the ecology, allocation of scarce resources – cannot be solved by individual people or individual nations. They can be solved only by cooperation and collaboration. Besides this, social contact, which inevitably initiates conflict, accommodation, or assimilation invariably, creates sympathies, prejudices, personal and moral relations, which modify, complicate and control competition.

Conflict, assimilation and accommodation are all intimately related to control. Competition is universal in the world of living things. The cumulative effects of innovations, technological revolution, environmental crisis, generation gap, new value orientation, break-up of the normative structure etc. are the factors which create conflicts. Social interaction is the reciprocal influences which human being exert on each other through inter stimulation and response. Social interaction and social process are interrelated factors. Society is an expression of different social processes and there are variety forms of social processes. Among the various processes, cooperation, conflict and competition are the important one.

3.7 GLOSSARY

Competition: Competition is impersonal, unconscious, continuous struggle between individuals or groups for satisfaction which, because of their limited supply, all may not have. Competition is that form of social action in which we strive against each other for the possession of or use of some limited material or non-material good.

Conflict: Conflict is the social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or threat of violence.

Human behaviour: Any response or reaction of an individual i.e. anything an individual does, says, thinks or feels.

Social order: A condition/situation of a society/group characterized by the predominance of harmonious social relationships.

Social Distance: degree to which individuals are willing to interact with people from different social background.

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q.1: Conflict is formally defined as the process of seeking to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors.

Conflict is an ever-present process in human relations. It may be

solved at one level, as when there is agreement on ends, and break out anew over the question of means. One may raise a profound question as to why conflict is such a constant feature of human society. The answer lies in the basic nature of human society. Human society is not a tightly compressed affair but instead has a loose integration. The integration is not on a biological but on a mental level. It must be created anew and constantly maintained through psychic processes such as indoctrination, inspiration and repetition. It must somehow rest on the possession of common and extra-personal ends on the part of its members. These ends cannot come from man's biological but only from communicative contact with his fellows; they thus differ greatly from one society to another because they are associated with differences of culture. This, then, gives first basis of conflict- ethnocentrism- the dislike of people with different culture and different ultimate ends from one's own.

Answer to Q.2: In contrast to conflict, which aims to destroy or liquidate the opponent, competition simply aims to out-do the competitor in achieving some mutually desired goal. It is thus a modified form of struggle. It implies that there are rules of game to which the competitors must conform and that behind these rules, justifying and maintaining them, is a common set of values superior to the competitive interest. It also implies an absence of coercion. The rules are so arranged that the ends must be obtained by other methods than fraud or physical force.

Answer to Q.3: Present day society is characterized by excessive amount of competition. Today man overlooks the institutions and rules, which alone make competition work-the protection of property, the enforcement of contracts, and the prevention of fraud. He overlooks the common ends and values which are not competitive but which are superior to those that are. He forgets that competition can be vicious as well as beneficent, that it can lead to starvation in the midst of plenty, to fear and insecurity; to instability and panic. Today we have forgotten that unlimited competition leads inevitably to monopoly, that the very success of strong leads to gigantic power over the weak and creates such inequality that a mockery is made of free contract .

3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Define competition.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Write in brief about the causes and characteristics of conflict.

Q.2: What are the general types of conflicts?

Q.3: Briefly discuss the types of competition and its role.

3.10 REFERENCES

1. Baron, R.A. & Byrne, D. (2000). *Social Psychology*, 8th Edition, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
2. Davis, K. (1954), "*Human Society*", McGraw-Hill Book company, New York