UNIT 1 SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND PROBLEMS

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to describe relationship between social transformation and social problems. After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- learn about the concept of 'social transformation', its two models of 'modernisation' and 'revolution' and their critical appraisal;

- understand the relationship between social transformation and social problems;

- describe the concept of 'social problems' and the related questions;

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● elucidate definitions, characteristics and types of social problems;

● discuss the linkage between social problems, institutions and movements; and

● explain policy implications in relationship to transformation and problems.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject matter of this unit is social transformation and social problems. Naturally, you have to understand the relationship between these two processes. Neither society nor social problems are static. Social problems are closely linked with social structure, ideologies, values, attitudes, institutions, power, authority and interests of society. The process of social transformation brings about change in these different aspects of social life and side by side generates new social problems.

First of all, let us try to understand the theoretical background of the concept of social transformation. In early sociology, concepts of 'evolution' and 'progress' were used to indicate the dynamic aspects of society. It was gradually realised that these were that these were value-loaded concepts, and therefore, replaced by 'social change' which was considered to be more neutral and value-free.

After the Second World War, concepts of 'development' and 'modernisation' occupied a significant place in the terminology of social sciences. These two concepts represent ideologies of the developed, industrialised, capitalist and democratic Western societies. The term 'revolution' was preferred by radical social scientists interested in overhauling the capitalist social system and influenced by the Marxist ideology.

'Social transformation' is a broad concept used to indicate social dynamics. The ideas, conveying the meanings of evolution, progress and change on the one hand and the meanings of development, modernisation and revolution, on the other, are incorporated within the concept of transformation.

Social transformation and social problems are closely linked with each other. Society is not static but the dominant groups in society sometimes want to perpetuate their hold over society and protect their interests by repressive methods. Thus, in a negative manner, if the process of social transformation is suppressed, it generates new social problems. On the other hand, if the process of social transformation is taking a natural course, the society faces the problems of adjustment during the transitional phase of the decline of the old system and the emergence of a new system.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The concept of 'social transformation' has occupied a significant place in social sciences after the Second World War. The literal meaning of the concept is 'changing form or appearance or character or alter out of recognition'. This concept was specifically used by Karl Marx in his book 'German Ideology' (1846) to mean a facet of social change which arises out of contradictions in a society and leading to rapid change or revolution. Marx feels that at some stage

of social development, there is a conflict between the material forces of production with the existing rules of production. The conflict, based on these contradictions, leads to social revolution. This phase of social revolution has been termed by Marx as a period of rapid social transformation. Social transformation indicates the change in the form of society or the rise of new formations. Rajni Kothari (1988) is of that view the modernisation and revolution are two models of social transformation. They can be presented in the following manner.

Social Transformation

Modernisation   Revolution

Let us discuss these two models of transformation one by one.

1.2.1   Model of Modernisation

Modernisation, as a concept, represents ideologies and values of the industrial, capitalist and democratic societies of the Western Europe and the North America. The opposite to modernised structure is agrarian, traditional, custom-based, technologically and economically backward social structures of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As pointed out by Daniel Lerner (1964) modernisation is represented by literacy, political participation, urbanisation, occupational mobility and empathy. The other characteristics of modernisation are free market, industrialisation, modern technology, democratic state and modern education. There are five major dimensions of modernisation i.e. technological, economic, political, social and psychological. Along with their components, they can be presented as follows:

Modernisation				
Technological	**Economic**	**Political**	**Social**	**Psychological**
• inanimate sources of energy • modern machines • heavy technology	• market • capital • commodity • consumerism	• freedom • individualism • democracy • political participation	• mobility • occupational differentiation • universalism • specificity • urban-industrial culture • literacy and modern education	• cosmopolitan mind • achievement orientation • empathy

In the model of modernisation, the transformation is supposed to be sustained, evolutionary, gradual and linear. In this gradual process, change is the result of a long duration. It is significant that the process of modernisation visualises a structural transformation in the society.

As pointed out, the modernisation model of development has a close relationship with the process of industrial and the industrial society. We are in the early part of the twentieth century. The industrial society has also undergone a phenomenal change over the last several decades.

1.2.2   Marxian Revolution Model

In this model, the change is brought about by men's intervention. As indicated by Engels, man is the only animal who is capable of transformation in accordance with this requirements.

Apart from the French (1779) and the American (1789) revolutions, the revolutionary social transformation was experimented effectively in this century in Soviet Russia (1719) and China (1949). According to the exponents of this model, the industrial-capitalist system is afflicted by exploitation of man by man. It has produced unprecedented social inequality. Despite industrialisation, application of heavy technology and a large scale production, man has lost his dignity in the capitalist model or modernisation. According to the exponents of the revolutionary model, only a revolutionary transformation can eliminate poverty, inequality, exploitation, unemployment and dehumanisation.

The final goal of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the revolutionary transformation is the building of a classless and stateless society based on equality. After the revolution, in the phase of transition, a society based on revolutionary transformation is characterised by the points as given below:

Society based on Revolutionary Model of Transformation (transitional phase)		
Collective ownership of the means of production	Power Structure based on the dictatorship of the proletariat	Decision Making based on a single political party (Communist Party) and its politbureau

Box 1.1

Sanskritisation and Westernisation

In the Indian Context, a clear distinction should be made between the two processes of transformation known as Sanskritisation and Westernisation. Sanskritisation as used by Srinivas refers to the imitation of the manners and customs of the upper castes by the lower castes, whereas, Westernisation means the impact of Western culture, values and institutions on the Indian Society. The basic attributes of the 'model of modernisation' as discussed in this unit are similar to the attributes of Westernisation.

Critical Appraisal of these Models

The human society has experienced both modernisation and revolutionary models of transformation. As pointed out by Rajni Kothari, human society has seen keen competition between these two models–leading to the global problems of Cold War, deadly armaments, threats of nuclear weapons, division of World into two power blocks (before the collapse of the Soviet Union) and attempts to dominate over others. The 19th Century European mind was full of optimism; it has tremendous faith in progress. After the First World War, the voices of dissent against the Western civilisation, its patterns of development and material advancement were raised by Joseph J. Spengler in his 'Decline of the West' and P.A. Sorokin in his 'Socio-Cultural Dynamics'. These writers stressed that Western civilisation represented by materialism, industrialisation and modern technology was moving towards decline. Perceptive Critical analysis of the industrial and capitalist pattern of modernisation was done by Karl Mannheim in his 'Man and Society: In an Age of Reconstruction', ErichFromm in his 'Sane Society' and Petre L. Berger and others in their 'Homeless Mind'. They were of the view that the industrialised capitalist societies of the West were moving towards —

- decline,

- disintegration and disorganisation,

- lack of moorings,

- weakening of institutions like family and religion,

- loss of autonomy of individuals, and

- emergence of mass society.

The functioning of communism, its system of production, economic organisation and power structure as a product of revolution were criticised by Kruschev, Djilas and Gorbachev. As a system, it created dictatorship, police-terror, executions, denial of human rights, decline in productions, collapse of economy and the creation of a 'new class' of party functionaries and the State officials. The social problems of violence, unequal distribution of resources, poverty, unemployment could not be solved by these two models of transformation. We have to keep in mind that when society starts moving from one formation to another formation, certain problems are bound to crop-up. The period, lying between the movements from one formation to another formation or from one stage of transformation to another stage of transformation, may be regarded as the stage of 'transition'. The period of transition in any society creates problems of social and psychological adjustment, cultural accommodation and economic recasting. Societies move forward in the pattern of challenge and response. Whenever there is any challenge, society tries to meet it by its response. When the responses are effective, there is positive transformation and development. When the responses do not meet the challenges, there is decline in a situation when there are likely to be a large number of social problems. Simply stated, social transformation results in social problems. The effort to solve social problems can initiate social transformation.

Check Your Progress 1

i) Explain the meaning of social transformation in eight lines.

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ii) Mention models of social transformation and enumerate major problems created by them in eight lines.

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iii) Indicate the names of major critics of the Western materialistic, capitalist model of modernisation with titles of their books.

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b) ....

c) ....

d) ....

e) ....

iv) Write a critique of the revolutionary model of transformation in five lines.

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1.3 TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

In the process of transformation, society moves from the traditional to modern social structure. Scholars also point out that human societies are becoming more and more globalised in the wake of fast spread of information and communication technology, industrial development, physical communication networks and so on.

1.3.1 Traditional and Modern Societies

The traditional Society is characterised by agriculture, villages, small scale undeveloped technology, customs and simple social structure. In traditional societies, there is said to be harmony in social relations and in social institutions. There is consistency between institutions, the accepted norms and patterns of behaviour. The mechanism of the social control operates through customs, folkways and mores. There tends to be a close correspondence between expectations and achievements in traditional societies.

The modern society is characterised by industry, cities, heavy technology, rule of law, democracy and complex social structure. The introduction of new social relations, new social roles as a result of transformation from the traditional society to modern society tends to make earlier behaviour ineffective to achieve new goals set as a result of the movement. This results in tensions and frustrations. To meet the changes, new patterns of behaviour emerge. The old established order changes and there is confusion. The changes in the various cultural items (e.g. acceptance of technology) would mean acceptance of scientific attitude to life, being punctual at the place of work, new forms of social organisation such as trade unions which are different from traditional values. It takes time for people to adjust to the emerging situations in the phase of transition when the 'old' is not fully rejected and the 'new' is not fully accepted.

1.3.2 Before and After Transformation

Whenever, there is either a gradual or a revolutionary transformation, certain problems are bound to emerge in society. For the purpose of understanding, we may consider two stages of society i.e., before the transformation and after the transformation. In the pre-transformation phase, the people develop their own way of life, social relations, norms, values, productive system and consumption patterns. With the process of transformation, people are required to adjust themselves to the new requirements. In the transformation phase, they find difficulties in moving away from the age old habits.

This point can be explained by taking the example of the Indian Society. India attained her independence by following the path of struggles–sometimes by revolutionary methods (for example the revolts of 1857 and 1942) and by and large, though by peaceful means yet determined resistance to colonialism. India, being an ancient civilisation, is characterised by certain traditional institutions like caste, joint family and untouchability. Indian society is moving from the traditional social structure to the modern one. Apart from the age old traditional institutions, now, there are certain new structures based on constitutional provisions such as a modern State, parliamentary democracy and organisations for the planned development of society.

In the post-independence period, concerted effort has been made through the constitutional provisions for social transformation and planned development, elimination of untouchability and creation of a just and equal society in India. Despite these efforts, even today, in several parts of India, untouchability is practised in one or the other form.

1.3.3 Examples of Linkage

Certain social problems are directly linked with social transformation. The process of rapid economic development and industrialisation are bound to take place in modern society. They are the indicators of modernisation but at the same time, they generate problems of regional imbalance, pollution, ecological degradation, slums linked with violence, crime and delinquency.

Democracy is supposed to provide equal opportunities to all citizens. It believes in legal and political equality. It is supposed to increase human dignity. But unfortunately, elections–an essential part of democracy–have encouraged regionalism, communalism and casteism in India.

Affluence and leisure are the indicators of a modern society. At the same time, they are creating problems of loneliness, alcoholism and drug addiction in highly industrialised societies as well as in the rich section of Indian society.

Activity

Write a two-page note on the impact of a factory on pollution as known to you.

1.4 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

All societies have certain situations which affect them adversely. In a commonsense way, social problems are considered as conditions which are widespread and have harmful consequences for the society. However, it is not quite as simple. What may have been considered as not harmful, at one time, may be considered harmful at other times. Smoking was not considered a serious social problems for over a long time. In contemporary times because of growing awareness of health hazards, it has become matter of great concern. It seems easy to understand social problem but when an effort is made to deal with them the complexities to the social problems become evident.

What might be considered a social a social problem in one society may be considered as such in another society. The perception is dependent on the norms and values in a society. In some societies divorce would be considered a social problem. In others, it may not be considered. So also with taking alcoholic drinks. Even within a society there might be differences of opinion when it is large and heterogeneous. There are certain behaviours which are considered as deviant and harmful in all societies viz. murder, rape, mental illness. There is no value-conflict in these conditions. Although, the approach to solutions to these problems may be different in different societies.

There are several issues involved in the conceptualisation of social problems which may be described as follows:

- at what stage, any specific condition is regarded as a social problem?
- how the gap between 'what actually exists' and 'what ought to be' is identified?
- what are the criteria to determine a social problem?

These questions are closely linked with the following points:

a) perception of the public,

b) social ideals and realities,

c) recognition by a significant number.

Let us discuss these points one by one.

Box 1.2

Crisis

Crisis is a medical concept used to indicate a critical stage of illness of a patient. Several Sociologists, such as Karl Mannheim, Albort Salomon and Bernard Rosenberg etc. in the place of disorganisation or deviance, prefer to use the concept of crisis to indicate the illness of modern society.

1.4.1 Perception of the Public

Often a social condition which is not in the interest of the society may exist over a long period without being recognised as such. It becomes a problem only when it is perceived as a problem. Poverty has been with us for a very long time. It is only after independence that poverty removal programme became an important component of our planning process.

The perception of the public is dependent on how visible a problem is. Crime is easily recognised and the public perceives it as a problem. There are, as mentioned earlier, problems which may exist but are not recognised. There may be some who see that a particular condition may become a problem and try to make people aware of the situation. Social movements start this way. Women in many societies suffer from many disabilities, denial of ownership of property, widow remarriage, right to divorce, equal wages etc. Yet few societies considered such situations as problematic only a few decades back. Women's liberation movements are trying to make the public aware of their plight. There must be therefore significant number in the public who perceives a situation as problematic.

1.4.2 Social Ideals and Realities

Social problems indicate a gap between what actually exists as compared to what ought to be or what is considered as ideal. The ideal of any society is based on values in a society. Social problems are defined as undesirable conditions in a society. What is undesirable is defined by the values. Values determine what is good and what is bad. Earlier it was noted that different societies have different values. Hence, what might be considered as bad or undesirable in one society may not be so in another society.

Social values are dynamic–they keep changing. What was considered a problem a few years ago may not now be considered as undesirable. Some years ago, boys and girls studying together in schools and colleges was not approved by a large number of people. At present, there is little opposition to it. There was not much concern till recently about the pollution–smoke from the factories, dumping of waste in rivers, cutting down of forest etc. However, there is now an awakening and great desire to protect the environment. There is a gap between social reality of the ecology being disturbed and the ideal to have an environment which is balanced and beneficial to the people.

1.4.3 Recognition by Significant Number

A social condition does not become a problem until a sufficiently large number of people think of it as a problem. The opinion makers can influence the thinking of the people. To go back to the earlier example, few thought of pollution of deforestation as a matter of concern about which something had to be done. However, there is now a much greater awareness of the harm caused by this to the society. Efforts are being made to reduce the ill effects of the cutting down of trees. If there is only a small group of people who consider a particular condition as bad they have to educate people, so that, there is public awareness.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

In the light of the different approaches and theories of the social problems, it is a difficult task to arrive at its commonly accepted definition. As pointed out by

Merton and Nisbet (eds.) (1971) sometimes, it appears, as if there is only a chaos of conflicting theories, but in Sociology, there is a condition of theoretical pluralism with differing theories often complementing each other. As regards theories and approaches to the understanding of social problems, we have discussed them in details in the Unit 2 of this Block.

Nisbet defines social problems as behavioural patterns regarded by a large portion of society as being in violation of one or more generally accepted social norms (Merton and Nisbet eds.), (1971). Merton thinks that social problems are a deviation from the accepted social ideals and they are dysfunctional.

On the other hand, Spector and Kitsuse define social problems as activities of groups which make protests to organisations, institutions and agencies against conditions which they regard as grievable.

Two clear perspectives emerge out of these definitions:

● Social problems are violations of accepted norms and deviations from the accepted Social ideals.

● They are a protest against certain grievances.

1.5.1 Characteristics of Social Problems

Now, let us try to understand the characteristics of social problems. They are as follows:

i) **A social problem is caused by many factors**

Earlier, it was indicated that there is a cause-effect relation with regard to a social problem. This does not however mean that a social problem can be explained or understood by one cause only. Illiteracy is caused by many factors, such as attitude of people to education, lack of schools in many areas, status of girl child, care of the younger children by older children, malnutrition and poverty to name a few. To solve the problem of illiteracy, all these problems have to be taken into consideration.

ii) **Social problems are interrelated**

Often there is a relation between various social problems. Ill-health is related to poverty, lack of education, attitude of sickness, unemployment, non-availability of medical care, status of women. It is not very difficult to see relations between all the 'causes' and the 'effects'.

iii) **Social problems affect individuals differently**

If there is inflation some people are affected by it more than others. People who are poor or who have fixed income will feel the problem more than those that are well-off and who have ways and means of increasing their income. Dowry is more a problem for the poor than for the rich. The family with a large number of daughters have a bigger problem in dowry than a family which has only sons. The problem of unemployment is more severe for those who are less educated and lack skills. It is also possible that some groups are affected more than others; for example–women, weaker sections, minorities, rural and urban poor.

iv) **Social problems affect all people**

The people in a society are interdependent. What affects one group will affect most members of the society also over time. Few persons are able to protect themselves fully against many of the social problems – violence, unemployment, inflation, communal riots and corruption etc.

Kenneth Henry (1978) rightly considers social problems as a Sociological process, as ideologically interpreted and as subject to different theoretical approaches.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Write in ten lines how and when a particular situation is considered to be harmful for society and is conceived as a social problem.

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ii) Define 'Social Problem' in eight lines.

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iii) Mention names of two books on social problems with names of their Writers/Editors.

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b)   ....

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iv) Enumerate characterstics of social problems.

a) ....

b) ....

c) ....

d) ....

1.5.2 Types of Social Problems

Merton classifies social problems in the following two categories:

i)   social disorganisation

ii) deviant behaviour

In all social problems, some elements of disorganisation refers to two conditions:

i)   **Social Disorganisation**

● inadequacies in the social system,

● ineffective working of status and roles.

There are certain sources of social disorganisation. In all societies, there are some consensus on values and interests. Whenever this degree of unanimity is disturbed by conflicting interests, we find trends of disorganisation in that particular society. Similar is the case with status and roles. Every individual occupies multiple statuses such as father, husband, member of a political party, practicing a profession and member of his professional organisation. He performs his roles accordingly. He decides his priorities of roles and acts accordingly in social life. But if there is a conflict between the different status and roles and a group of people are not in a position to decide their priorities or to reconcile between the conflicting roles, it is bound to lead to social disorganisation. The process of socialisation helps people to learn language, customs, traditions, culture and values of the group. If the process of Socialisation either at the level of family or school and the peer group is defective, it will adversely affect the personality of the member of a group and the organised functioning of the group itself. Society develops informal and formal mechanism of social control to regulate behaviours of its members. Whenever, these mechanisms do not work in a effective manner, the trends of disorganisation are visible in the society.

The social disorganisation is manifested in the breakdown in the effective institutional functioning, disorganisation of family, marital breakdown, poverty, collective violence, population explosion, community disorganisation and urban problems such as slums and inhuman living conditions.

ii) **Deviant Behaviour**

The concept of deviant behaviour is used by Sociologists to include serious crimes as well as the violation of moral codes. In every society, there is a commonly agreed idea of normal behaviour. Whenever someone moves away from the accepted norm and behaves differently that behaviour may be regarded as abnormal or deviant behaviour.

The crimes, juvenile deliquencies, mental disorders, drug addition and alcoholism are some of the examples of deviant behaviour.

Box 1.3

Social Pathology

Social Pathology is a sub-division of Sociology conceptually borrowed from the medical sciences. In Sociological literature, several books have been written under the titles of social disorganisation and social problems. The sub-division of Sociology concerned with these problems has often been called as the Sociology of Social problems or deviance. Some Sociologists who stress on the crisis aspect have preferred to call this sub-division as Social Pathology.

1.6 SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social problems, under several circumstances, are the products of outdated institutions. For example monarchy, as an institution, is mainly responsible for repressive measures against democratic aspirations, even today, in many countries of the world. Similarly, problem of untouchability is linked with the caste system in India. The system of arranged marriages is basically the cause of dowry and dowry death in our society. Apart from the institutional settings, sometimes, the programmes launched for development also result in social problems. The large scale requirements of timber for constructions, railways, furniture and fuels have caused deforestation. Industrialisation and the expansion of the factory system has led to the pollution of air, water and the earth. Construction of big dams, power projects, high ways etc. lead to large scale dis-placement of the local people.

Further, social problems are also a result of the gap between the social ideals and the actual practice. Inspite of so much talks against corruption and slogans for the value-based politics by press, public leaders and intelligentsia is India from the platform and in the mass-media, corruption in public life and criminalisation of politics has increased in our society. As indicated by Feagin(1986) the protests and movements organised by people against social problems and for social change are very significant.

1.6.1 Obstacles in Implementation

It is not an easy task to organise movements against social problems. There are many vested interest groups who may want a particular situation to continue. The forest contractors would oppose the stopping of the felling of trees. The owners of liquor shops would not favour prohibition. Over a time, movements are able to make the government and other institutions recognise the situation and accept the legitimacy of the claim. As a result, policies could be formulated by the government to deal with the situation – rules against deforestation, various laws to improve the conditions of women (equal wages, laws against dowry, sati, inheritances etc.) The formulation of policies by itself is not sufficient. It is to be implemented. Often there is a delay or inadequate efforts. The movement then has to focus on getting the policy implemented. Many times there is no complete solution to a problem. Social movements indicate that collective action can get action from authorities.

1.6.2 Stages of Movements

The outmoded institutional settings, the ill-conceived programmes and the increasing gap between ideals and practice are often either not perceived or ignored by the silent majority in any society. Some people are able to see these problems. At first stage, there is the awareness about social problems in a few individuals or in a small group. At the second stage, they try to propagate their point of view among the people. At the third state, there is organised dissent, protest and agitation. Finally, it leads to the building of a movement. If we take the example of the *Sati Pratha* as practiced in India in the 19th century and the movement started by Raja Rammohan Roy against it then we find that the anti-sati movement passed through all the phases which are mentioned above. Now, all over the world in general and in India in particular, there is a powerful women movement to protect the rights and interest of women. The organisation of Indian women along with the enlightened citizens and mass-media are fighting against dowry and dowry deaths. Similarly, there is the movement of environmentalists against ecological degradation and pollution. The *Chipko* movement launched in the hills of Uttar Pradesh against deforestation has attracted world wide attention. The voluntary organisations and officials are trying to create awareness against drug addiction and alcoholism.

There is a close relationship between the remedial measures against the social problems and the social movements. Social movements arise when some people feel that a particular situation is not good for the society and that something should be done to change it.

1.7 SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL POLICY

Social policy refers to the view that a government has on a particular situation and how it will deal with it. In India, there is a social policy on education, women, environment, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, urbanisation, and drug addiction etc. There is intimate relationship between social movements, social problems and social policy.

Social movements pressurise governments to evolve remedial measures to control social problems. In this context, we have to keep in mind that only the acceptance of a policy and its announcement will not solve social problems. The *Sarada Act* was enacted in the late twenties to check child marriage but it has not fully succeeded in stopping child marriage. The social legislations against untouchability were passed in the mid fifties but even till today the practice of untouchability is not fully eradicated from our society. Inspite of constitutional provisions, all children of the school going age do not attend schools.

Actually, strong social movements, public awareness and official policies–all the three must work together to combat against social problems. In this context, we have to keep in view that the State is the most powerful and significant institution in modern society. Its role is very important in combating against social problems. But state intervention has got its own limits and it can be more effective if there is the support of the people behind the actions of the state and policies adopted by it.

1.7.1   Policy, Ideology and Welfare

We have yet to understand the relationship between social policies and social welfare on the one hand and social policy and ideology on the other. It is difficult to differentiate between social policies and social welfare policies as some of the groups which are covered under social policy may also need welfare. All over the world, irrespective of ideologies, States are adopting welfare policies such as child-welfare, youth-welfare, women-welfare, welfare of aged, welfare of the weaker sections and policies related to employment, security, health scheme, education, ecology and rural-urban development. These policies have contributed very significantly in curbing the ménace of the several social problems. The policy with regard to social problems is dependent on ideology. The capitalist point of view would be that open market and free economy would take care of the needs of society. The individuals can look after their own welfare. The socialists feel that the structure of the society should be changed through the State intervention. A government is therefore likely to formulate a policy according to its ideological commitment.

There cannot be an overall policy with regard to all social problems. Each problem has to be dealt with separately. The laws that are passed are often related to specific problems. For example–drug-addiction, dowry, prohibition, child labour etc. It would be obvious that each of these aspects needs to be dealt with in a special way.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Define Social disorganisation with suitable examples in five lines.

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ii) What is deviant behaviour? Write in four lines with suitable examples.

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iii) Mention the different stages of a social movement in four lines.

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iv) Define Social Policy.

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1.8   LET US SUM UP

This unit began with the concept of transformation and its models of modernisation and revolution. The relationship between social transformation and social problems, concept definitions, characteristics and types of social problems are also discussed in this unit. The linkage between social problems, institutions and movements and finally the policy implications in terms of transformation and problems are also highlighted in this unit.

1.9   KEY WORDS

Social Transformation	:	It is a broad concept which incorporates the meaning of evolution, progress, change, on the one hand, and development, modernisation and revolution on the other. Its literal meaning is 'changing form' or 'appearance' or 'character'.
Modernisation	:	Development of a society, from the traditional, agricultural, rural, custom based, particularistic structure to urban, industrial, technological and universalistic structure is called modernisation.
Revolution	:	The violent or non violent abrupt social change making reversal of condition, or bringing about fundamental change is called revolution.
Social Problems	:	Behavioural patterns – in violation of accepted social norms or protests against grievances are called social problems.
Deviant Behaviour	:	It is used by Sociologists to include serious crimes as well as violation of moral codes. Whenever commonly accepted idea of 'normal' is violated by someone's behaviour that is termed as the deviant behaviour.

1.10   FURTHER READINGS

Merton K., Robert, Nisbet Robert, 1971 COntemporary Social Problems, Fourth Edition, Harcourt Brace and Co., New York.

Lerner Daniel, 1964 THepassing of Traditional Society, The Free Press, London.

Polanki Karl, 1957 The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origin of our Time, Beacon Press, Boston.

Kothari Rajani, 1988 Transformationand Survival, Ajanta Publications, Delhi

1.11 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Social transformation is a broad concept used to indicate social dynamics. The literal meaning of this concept is 'changing form of appearance or character or alter out of recognition'. According to Marx, transformation is that facet of social change which indicates the rise of contradictions in a society leading to rapid change or revolution. Social transformation refers to the change in the form of society or the rise of new formulations.

ii)   a)   **Modernisation**

           It represents economy, polity and values of the industrialised capitalist societies – representing extreme of affluence and extreme of distress. It is responsible for poverty, unemployment and deprivation in a vast section of mankind and over-abundance, over-production and over-consumption in another very small section

      b)   **Revolution**

           The functioning of communism as a product of revolution has been criticised for its association with dictatorship, police terror, executions, denial of human rights, decline in productions, collapse of economy and creation of a new class of the part functionaries and the state officials.

iii) a)   Joseph J. Spengeer: The Decline of the West
      b)   P.A. Sorokin: The Social and Cultural Dynamics
      c)   Karl Mannheim: Man and Society: in an AGe of Recondstruction
      d)   Erich From: The Same Society
      e)   Pelne L. Berger and others: 'Homeless Mind'

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Social problems are widespread conditions which have harmful consequences for the society. The perception of being harmful is dependent on the norms and values of a society. Certain problems are directly linked with social transformation. Rapid industrialisation generates the problem of regional imbalance pollutions and slums. In the following condition, a situation is considered to be harmful and becomes a social problem:

      a)   gap between social ideals and reality.
      b)   recognition by a significant number.

ii)   Social problems are behavioural patterns regarded by a large protion of society as being in violation of the accepted social norms. They are also considered as a deviation from the accepted social ideals and thus they are sysfunctional. Another definition regards social problems as activities

of groups which make protests against conditins which they regard as grievable.

iii) a) Robert K. Merton and Robert Nisbet, Contemporary Social Problems

b) Kenneth Henry, Social Problems, Institutional and Interpersonal Perspectives.

iv) a) A social problem is caused by many factors,

b) Social problems are interrelated,

c) Social problems affect individuals differently,

d) Social problems affect all people.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Social disorganisation refers to the breakdown in the effective institutional functioning. Whenever the balance in socity is disturbed by conflicting values, lack of proper socialisation and weakening of the mechanism of social control that state of society is termed as disorganisation. Its examples are familydisorganisation, marital breakdown and community disorganisation.

ii) In every society, there is a commonly agreed idea of normal behaviour. Whenever, someone moves away from the accepted norms and behaves differently, that behaviour may be regarded as abnormal or deviant behaviour. The crimes,juvenile deliquencies, mental disorders etc. are the examples of the deviant behaviour.

iii) a) awareness in a few individuals

b) propagation of their point of view among the people

c) organised dissent, protest and agitation

d) finally, building of a movement

iv) Social policy refers to the view that a government has on a particular situation and how it will deal with it.

UNIT 2   APPROACHES AND PARADIGMS

Structure

2.0   OBJECTIVES

In the Unit 1, we discussed about social transformation and problems. After going through the Unit 1, you must have understood these two concepts and their relationship.

Now, in the Unit 2, we are going to discuss the various approaches to the study of social problems and the paradigms of transformation. After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand different approaches to the study of social problems;

- explain the basic formulations of the Functionalist, the Marxist and the Gandhian approaches;

- examine the inadequacies of these approaches;

- grasp the dysfunctional aspects of socio-economic development at the global, national and the local levels and the need for alternative approaches;

- describe the different paradigms of transformation; and

- elucidate the roles and limitation of the state intervention.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Unit 1, the concept of transformation is already introduced to you. All Societies, in one or the other form, experience slow or rapid transformation. The Societies which experience slow process of transformation find little difficulties in adjusting to the changed conditions. By and large, the slow process of social transformation is visible in the tribal and agrarian structures, whereas, it is more rapid in the urban-industrial social structure characterised by cities, high technology, modern production, consumerism, rapid means of transport and communication, migration, mobility, anonymity, secondary groups and impersonal relationships.

The strains caused by the rapidity of social transformation and even a partial inability on the part of the society to recast its structural frame in accordance with the changed conditions either strengthen the existing challenges to the social order or generate new tensions and problems.

This point can be explained by taking the example of urbanisation. Urbanisation, as a process, is an important indicator of social transformation. At the same time, this process produces social problems such as poverty, unemployment, overcrowding in cities, shortage of housing, lack of civic amenities, impersonal relationship, slums and a social environment which leads to delinquency, crime and other anti-social activities. Man, as a social being, encounters rapid social transformation on the one hand and constantly endeavours to find out appropriate solution to social problems generated by social transformation on the other.

Social problems afflict societies and to understand their nature and find answer to them, it is relevant to discuss different sociological approaches which emerged in the course of the understanding of the nature and genesis of social problems. This point has to be kept in view that the society has concerns for the normal as well as the abnormal conditions of society. It is concerned with happy families as much as unhappy or problem families. A Student of Sociology studies social problems in order to arrive at a better understanding of the abnormal social conditions which adversely affect social functioning. There is a close relationship between social and personal problems. The problems which appear to be personal in nature such as sickness, personal violence, malnutrition etc. are linked with social conditions that afflict thousands in similar life situations.

2.2 EARLY APPROACHES

Historically, starting from the 17th Century upto the beginning of the 19th Century when law and order was the major concern of the state and the ruling elite, crime was the main social problem which attracted the attention of the early social thinkers. There were several exercises either in the form of beliefs and superstitutions or in the form of serious and systematic understanding of

the problems of famine, epidemics and crimes. For the purpose of understanding, they may be classified as follows:

● beliefs and superstitions,

● classical approach,

● physical-constitutional approach.

2.2.1 Beliefs and Superstitions

Starting from the primitive phase of human life till today, man has been facing famines scarcity, epidemic, violence, homicide and crimes. These problems, in many societies in the early periods or in some segments of human society even today, are considered to be the outcome of the influence of spirits, ghosts and witches. Such beliefs are based on the lack of proper understanding between the cause and effect relationship.

2.2.2 The Classical Approach

Starting from the 18th Century, some attempts were made to understand crime in a more systematic manner. Cesare Becaria (1764) an Italian and Jeremey Bentham (1823) an Englishman were the pioneers who did serious exercise to explain the causation of crime as a social problem. Their formulations are known as the classical theory or approach which stressed on the hedonistic or the pleasure seeking nature of men which motivate them to violate accepted social norms and thus resulting in crimes. In other words, some men commit crimes in order to gain pleasure or crimes are utilitarian for them.

2.2.3 The Physical Constitutional Traits

Later on, some empirical or positivist efforts were made to explain the occurrence or crimes as a social problem. Cesar Lombroso (1836-1909) an Italian viewed crimes in relation to physical-constitutinal traits, therefore, this approach is known as physical constitutional approach or the Italian School of the theory of crimes. Since, he tried to verify his assumptions by empirical methods, this is also known as the Positivist approach to the explanation of crimes. According to Lombroso:

● criminals are born with certain physical traits,

● the physical traits of criminals are different from the normal persons.

2.2.4 Critical Review

A critical review of these approaches reveal their limitations which are as follows:

● the first approach was based only on superstitions and ignorance,

● the latter two approaches are only of historical importance today,

● they are not based on the scientific analysis of crimes,

● the focus of the classical and the physical constitutional approaches is on individuals,

● they have not kept in view the social, economic and cultural factors.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Describe major characteristics of the Urban-industrial social structure in three lines.

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ii) Mention the names of the two main propounders of the classical approach to crime with countries of their origin.

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iii) Indicate the name of one main propounder of the Physical-Constitutional approach to crime as a social problem with country of his origin.

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iv) Discuss the limitations of the early approaches in eight lines.

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2.3   CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES

The 19th Century European Society experienced a great social transformation which is characterised by the decline of the hold of church, monarchy, feudalism and the rise of secular ideology state and the industrial revolution. Accordingly, there was a shift in ideas, methods of analysis and conceptualisation.

The distinct intellectual trends were visible during this century in the field of social sciences:

●   in the first trend, the major emphasis was on the centrality of 'social order' with major components of preservation, solidarity, cohesion and integration,

●   in the second trend, the central theme was social dynamics with its components of contradictions and conflict.

Out of the two intellectual trends there was the emergence of the functionalist and the Marxist approaches.

In the 19th Century the Indian society was fully subjugated by the British power. The Gandhian approach to eradicate problems of subjugation, colonial cultural domination, decline of village-industries, hold of superstitions, fear and untouchability can be grasped in the light of this socio-political background.

In contemporary period, a definite shift is visible in the analysis of social problems. Briefly, this shift in analysis can be explained in the following manner:

● earlier social problems and their causation were explained in terms of individuals. Now, the emphasis is on the social, economic, political, cultural or on structural factors.

● earlier emphasis was on the maintenance of social order and preservation of equilibrium which used to make social change a suspect phenomenon. Now, it is accepted that strains and social problems emerge due to contradictions existing in the social system which can be sorted out by removing these contradictions.

There are different perspectives to explain in the nature and genesis of social problems in contemporary sociology. These perspectives have given birth to two major theoretical approaches which are as follows:

● the Functional approach,

● the Marxist approach.

In the Indian context, out of his experiments on political movements and social reconstruction, Gandhi tried to develop a framework to eradicate social problems and to reorganize Indian society. Thus, the third approach which we have to explain is:

● the Gandhian approach.

2.3.1 The Functional Approach

The functional approach views society as a system, that is, as a set of inter-connected parts which together form a whole. The basic unit of anylysis in society and its various parts are understood in terms of their relationship to the whole. Thus, social institutions, such as family and religion, are analysed by functionalists as a part of the social system rather than as isolated units. As parts, they contribute to the integration and maintenance of the system as a whole.

Thus, parts of society are functional insofar as they maintain the system and contribute to its healthy survival. The functional approach also employs the concept of dysfunction to refer to the effects of any social institution which detracts from the maintenance of society. The concept of dysfunction is of vital significance in the modern study of social problems.

The functionalist point of view is reflected in the works of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer–two of the founding father of Sociology. Later, it was developed by Emile Durkheim. It was further refined by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. The early functionalists drew analogy between society and an organism such as the human body. Just as an organism has certain basic need which must be satisfied if it is to survive, similarly, society has certain

basic needs which must be met if it is to continue to exist. The basic emphasis of the early functionalists is on the following points:

- well-knit relationship between parts (individuals, family, religion, education, law etc.) and the whole (society),

- smooth functioning of the system,

- maintenance of order,

- cohesiveness, and

- social solidarity.

i)   **The Functional Pre-requisites**

In this approach certain functional pre-requisites (necessary conditions of social existence) are identified. They are considered to strengthen the processes of integration, adaptation and maintenance and to help in the smooth functioning of society. The major pre-requisites are as follows:

- role differentiation,

- communication,

- normative regulation,

- socialisation, and

- social control.

If there is a breakdown in the functional pre-requisites, society will face social problems and social disorganisation.

ii)   **The Concept of Role**

In the functional analysis, the concept of 'role' occupies an important place. It refers to the work which an individual or an institution is expected to perform. The roles are assigned to individuals on the basis of their personal motivations and the social need. People performing on type of role belong to one position, strata or class. In all societies, there are role differentiation of individuals and institutions. As groups of individuals perform different roles, similarly, social institutions like family and religion also perform their assigned and expected role which are different from each other.

According to the functional analysis, if the role differentiation or the role performance is not in accordance with the prescribed norms, the functioning of society is affected and different social problems crop up.

After explaining the general formulations, now, let us consider the views of some major functionalist thinkers in more specific terms.

iii)   **Social Facts and Anomie**

In the functionalist analysis, the way the relationship between 'parts' and the 'whole' has been explained, it gives an impression that the 'whole' is simply of the sum total of 'parts'. However, Durkheim in clear terms rejects this formulation in his studies on division of labour, religion and suicide. The major points of Durkheim's analysis are as follows:

- Sui generis nature of society.

- Social facts, and

- anomie

The Society is a self-emergent reality (termed by Durkheim as reality 'sui generis') which is out of and above the individuals. The members of a society are constrained by social facts which are defined by Durkheim as ways of acting, thinking and feeling. These are external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion by reason of which individuals are bound to obey social facts.

In Durkheim's analysis, social facts may be divided into normal and pathological types. The division of labour, religion, law and morality are normal social facts, whereas, anomie (normlessness) is a a pathological condition of society. The extreme form of 'division of labour' is characterised by cut-throat competition, interest orientation and the lack of societal consciousness in individual. In such a situation, anomie trends emerge. In Durkheim's concept, 'anomie' is a major social problem. Durkheim feels that the 'intensity' of the 'collective conscience' decreases with over differentiation and the extreme form of the division of labour. The actions of members of a group cannot be regulated by common social ideals in such a situation. The extreme form of differentiation, lack of common beliefs, morals and ideals create normlessness which has been called by Durkheim as 'anomie'.

Activity 1

On the basis of personal understanding of your village/locality/office, write a note of two pages and the actual functioning of the division of labour in any one of these three fields.

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iv) **Social Order and the Value Consensus**

As Durkhiem's major concern is 'social solidarity', similarly, the emphasis of Parsons is on social order which he has developed in his book 'Social System'. He observes that social life is characterised by 'mutual advantage and peaceful co-operation rather than mutual hostility and destruction'. Parsons believes that only commitment to common value provides a basis for order in society.

According to Parsons, 'value' – consensus forms the fundamental integrating principle in society. Common goals, unity and cooperation are derived from the shared values. The social values provide a general conception of what is desirable and worthwhile. The goals provide direction in specific situations. The roles provide the means whereby values and goals are translated into action.

According to Parsons, there are two main ways in which social equilibrium (the various parts of the system being in a state of balance) is maintained:

- The first involves socialisation by means of which values are transmitted from one generation to the next and internalised to form an integral of individual personalities. The family and education system in the Western Society are the major institutions concerned with this function.

- Secondly, it is also maintained by the various mechanism of social control which discourage deviance and so maintain order in the system. Thus, the processes of socialisation and social control are fundamental to the equilibrium of the system and therefore to the order in society.

Thus, socialisation and social control in inculcate the spirit of 'value-consensus' and help in the maintenance of the order.

According to Parsons, adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance are the functional pre-requisites. These are essential preconditions for the survival of society.

It may be summed up that social problems are indicated by the lack of order and value-consensus which are the result of the lack of socialisation, social control, adaptation, goal attainment, and pattern maintenance.

The weakening or absence of these conditions ultimately disturb the 'social equilibrium' leading to disorganisation, crime, delinquency and other social problems.

Activity 2

Prepare a two-page note on the nature of social integration in India of the people belonging to the different religions, languages and regions.

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v)   The Social Dysfunction, Anomie and Structure

The social problems have both objective and subjective aspects. They have been termed as 'manifest' and 'latent' respectively by Merton. It is, essential to study not only manifest social problems which are clearly identified in society but also latent social problems which refer to conditions that are also at odds with current interest and values but are not generally recongnised as being so. The manifest problems are apparent and objective, whereas, the latent problems remain suppressed and are subjective.

Both, manifest as well as latent aspects of social problems, are linked with dysfunctions.

In Merton's analysis the study of social problems require a focus on the dysfunctions of patterns of behaviour, belief and organisation rather than stressing simply on their functions only. A social dysfunction, according to Merton, is any process that undermines the stability or survival of a social system. This concept curbs any tendency towards the doctrine that everything in society works for 'harmony' and integration.

A social dysfunction is a specific inadequacy of a particular part of the system for meeting a functional requirement. Dysfunction provides a set of consequences which interfere with the requirements of functions in a social system. For example, large scale migration from villages to cities is dysfunctional for maintaining social solidarity, demographic composition and cultural ethos of the rural life. At the same time, it is dysfunctional for urban life also since, it increases overcrowding and decreases basic civic amenities. The same social pattern can be dysfunctional for some and functional for others in a social system. The accumulation of dysfunctions disturbs social stability and creates new social problems.

Merton suggested that certain phases of social structure generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a normal response. Among the elements of social and cultural structure, two are important for the purpose of approaching social problems. In this context, two aspects of social structure must be kept in view:

- The *first* consist of culturally defined goals. It comprises as frame of aspirational references. Some of these cultural aspirations are related to the original drives of man, but they are not determined by them.
- The *second* of the structure is socially approved means.

Every social group couples its cultural objectives with regulations rooted in institutions of approved procedures for moving toward these objectives.

With varying differential emphasis upon goals and institutionalised means, the society becomes unstable and there develops anomie or normlessness.

In this way the theory of anomie and opportunity – structure, set forth by Merton states that the rates of various kinds of deviant behaviour are highest where people have little access to socially legitimate means for achieving culturally induced goals. For example, the culture affirms that all members of society have a right to improve their social status but they are excluded from acceptable means for doing so. This denial of opportunity directs us to the structural sources of social problems.

Check Your Progress 2

i) What is dysfunction? Describe its importance in the study of social problems in about eight lines.

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ii) Define latent functions and show their significance in the functional approach in about four lines.

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2.3.2 The Marxist Approach

Marx begins with the simple observation that in order to survive man must produce food and material objects. In doing so he enters into relationship with other men. From the simple hunting stage to the complex industrial stage, production is a social enterprise.

Except the societies of pre-history, all societies contain basic contradictions which means that they cannot survive in their existing form. These

contradictions involve the exploitation of the poor by the rich. For example, in the feudal society, lords exploited their serfs. In capitalist system, capitalists exploit their workers. This creates fundamental conflict of interest between these two classes since, one gains at the expense of the other. Thus social problems in society represent contradictions inherent in it.

According to Marx, the capitalist system is beset by a number of social problems such as:

- exploitation of man by man,
- inequality and poverty,
- alienation of workers from their own products,
- dehumanisation.

In this context, we would specially like to discuss inequality and poverty, in the light of the Marxian theoretical frame. These two problems are specially concerned with Indian Society.

i) Inequality

According to Marx inequality occurs in all societies because of unequal distribution of means of production.

From the Marxian perspective, the key pre-requisite of a society based on equality is 'each one according to his need', whereas, in the capitalist system and in the functional analysis the emphasis is on 'each one according to his capacity'.

The functionalists and the Marxists disagree on the sources of inequality. Both agree that inequality is linked to the division of labour in society. Marx stressed that social inequality was ultimately the result of economic disparity and deprivation. According to functionalists, stratification is functional for society and stratified. Societies are bound to have social inequality. The merit, ability, performance and achievements of all men are not equal. Thus, in the functionalist analysis, social inequality also appears to be functional.

ii) Poverty

Poverty in capitalist society, according to Marx, can only be understood in terms of the system of inequality generated by the capitalist economy. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of those who own the means of production. Members of the working class own only their labour which they are bound to sell in return for wages in the labour market.

From a Marxian perspective, the state in capitalist society reflects interests of the ruling class, the Government measures, therefore, can be expected to do little except reduce the harsher effects of poverty.

Even in the capitalist societies, the measure of Social Welfare and Social Securities have been adopted to minimise the hardships of the poor and socially deprived people. These measures have helped the needy but they have not resulted in the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. Excess of poverty and the excess of wealth in the hands of a few are inevitable consequences of the capitalist system. The solution to poverty does not involve reforms in the social security measures. Instead, like other social problems under capitalism, it requires a radical change in the structure of society.

2.3.3 The Gandhian Approach Related to Social Problems

For the proper understanding of the Gandhian approach, a clear distinction must be made between his basic perspectives and the immediate social and political concerns. As regards his basic perspectives, Gandhi wanted to create a moral order based on truth, non-violence, brotherhood, *swadeshi*, *swaraj*, decentralisation of power and economy, austerity and resistance to injustice by determined peaceful means known as *Satyagraha*.

There were several social problems of long and short ranges faced by Indian Society such as low position of women, untouchability, poverty, illiteracy, colonial education, village reconstruction and day to day political problems. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene as a political leader and as a social thinker, he was deeply concerned with them.

i) Means and Ends

Gandhian approach to social problems regards means and ends as parts of a whole which has transcendental reference, unlike, Marx who places emphasis on ends. Gandhi stood steadfastly for a non-exploitative social order for he understood well that violence is built into an exploitative system. Gandhi's major goal in life was to achieve *swaraj* for India. His socio-political philosophy was based on truth, non-violence and the unity of means and ends.

For Gandhi, means are more than instrumental. They are creative. His quest for creative means derived from a positive spiritual decision has armed men with a gallant ethical arsenal to resist all oppressions. Exerted either from within the social system or from outside. Gandhi has preferred to call this instrument as *Satyagraha*. To him, not only the end but means to achieve them should also be equally pure.

ii) The New Economic System

Gandhi said, you cannot build a non-violent society on factory civilisation but it can be built on self-contained villages. The violence that prevails to day has its roots mainly in economic factors and the only remedy for it lies in doing away with concentration of wealth in the society. The productive system should be based on the idea of progressive and regulated minimisation of needs and not on that of multiplication of wants. The economy should be life-centred and not one that is oriented to commodity production. This means that the socio-economic system should operate on the principle of a metaphysically grounded optimum and not on the principle of maximisation. Consequently, it is to be a non-exploitative economy based on simple and limited technology. Social and economic organisation should be decentralised–based on the principle of optimum autonomy. The social and economic systems should be non-competitive and non-acquisitive, based on the principle of 'trusteeship'.

iii) Inequality

Gandhian approach envisages that the goal of economic equality is equality of wages for an honest day's work, be it that of a lawyer, a doctor, a teacher or a scavenger. It requires much advanced training to reach that state of equality.

So, economic equality of Gandhian conception does not mean that everybody would literally have the same amount or would possess an equal amount of

worldly goods. It is possible to reduce the difference between the rich and the poor. There must be a general leveling down of the few rich in whose hands the bulk of the national's wealth is concentrated and a levelling up of the dumb millions. Further, everyone must be assured a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, sufficient cloth to cover himself, facilities to educate his children and adequate medical relief. So, the real meaning of economic equality is 'to each according to his need'. Gandhi did not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent for such a society carries with it the seeds of ultimate destruction.

He wanted the rich to hold their wealth in trust for the poor to give it up for them. A state of economic equality cannot be brought about by dispossessing the wealthy of their possession through resort to violence. Violent action does not benefit society for it stands to lose the gifts of a man who may know how a produce can add to the wealth.

iv) The Caste System and the Untouchability

In his early writing, Gandhi appeared to favour *Varnashram* which implied to him self-restraint, conservation and economy of energy. Arrogation of superior status by any of the *varna* over another is the denial of the human dignity and particularly so in the case of the section of society which was considered untouchables in an unjust manner. Untouchability is a curse that has come to us. So long as Hindus willfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, *Swaraj* cannot be attained.

v) Constructive Programmes

Gandhi coined a new term known as '*Harijan*' for the so called untouchable. He was so much concerned with the eradication of untouchability that in 1934 he resigned from the ordinary membership of the Indian National Congress and vowed to devote his full time for the eradication of untouchability.

Besides removal of untouchability and the development of *Khadi*, Gandhian constructive programme consisted of communal unity, prohibition, village sanitation, health and hygiene, basic education, adult education and literacy, uplift of women, spread of *Hindustani*, work for economic equality, service of the aboriginal's and organisation of students, peasants and labourers.

The communication order aimed in Gandhian approach depended upon a life on non-exploitation which was in consonance with the eleven vows advocated by Gandhi. These vows are truth, non-violence, control of the pations, non-stealing, non-possession, fearlessness, *Swadeshi*, removal of untouchability, labour, tolerance, and equality of religions.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Write a note on the social problesm in the capitalist sociey as perceived by Karl Marx. Use seven lines to answer.

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ii) What are the significant points in Gandhian approach? Answer in eight lines.

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2.4 INADEQUACIES OF THESE APPROACHES

The Functional, Marxian and the Gandhian approaches have tried to understand social problems from their own perspectives. No approach can be regarded as final. We have to keep in mind that these approaches emerged according to the requirements of their time and the place of origin. The classical functionalist like Comte, Spencer and Durkheim were concerned with the problems of the 19th Century European society which was experiencing new challenges with the process of transformation, i.e., moving from rural to urban, agricultural to industrial, feudal to capitalist system. Naturally, they were concerned with reorganisation of society, functional integration and social solidarity. On the other hand, Karl Marx was more concerned with historical development of human society and problems generated by industrialisation and capitalism such as alienation, exploitation of man by man, dehumanisation and inhuman working conditions in the emerging industrial and urban centres. Gandhi was primarily concerned with the problems of Indian society such as colonialism, imperialist exploitation, untouchability, status of women, alcoholism, weakening of rural communities and the destruction of cottage industries etc.

These approaches have been questioned for their inadequacies. In a brief manner, we would like to discuss the inadequacies of these approaches one by one.

2.4.1 Critical Review of the Functional Approach

The basic premises of the functional approach have been questioned by P.A. Sorokin in his book, 'Sociological Theories Today', 1966. According to Sorokin, the shared orientations and goals of slaves and masters and of the conquered and their conquerors are not the same, inspite of the fact they are the part of the same society. As regards the dysfunctional aspects, Sorokin raises the question whether the activities of Socrates, Jesus and Marx may be

regarded as functional or dysfunctional, whether the emphasis of the early Christian communities or the civil rights workers are the emphasis of adaptation or non adaptation. The answer to these questions will depend upon with which side we identify ourselves in respective societies.

The functional approach treats an effect as a cause. It explains that parts of a system exist because of their beneficial consequences for the system as a whole. Further, it gives a deterministic view of human action because human behaviour has been portrayed as determined by the system. Man is pictured as an automation, programmed, directed and controlled by the system.

Alvin Gouldner states that while stressing the importance of ends and values that men pursue, Parsons never asks whose ends and values these are. Few functionalists accept the possibility that some groups in society, acting in terms of their own interests, dominate others. From this point of view social order is imposed by the powerful and value consensus is merely a legitimation of the position of the dominant group.

Functionalists, thus fail to recognise the conflict of interests which tend to produce instability and disorder. Conflict is also an integral part of the system, hence is equally relevant to the sociological analysis of social problems. In the functionalist approach, historical explanations find little place in understanding society and its problems.

2.4.2 Critique of the Marxist Approach

Both, the Functionalist and the Marxian approaches are deterministic in nature. In the first, the deterministic factor is social system, whereas, in the second it is the mode of production and economy.

While making a critical review of the Marxian approach, we must keep in view the following two aspects of Marxism:

● Marxism as a theory,

● Marxism as a practice.

As regards the first aspect, Marxian approach has over emphasised the role of material forces and conflict. It has over-simplified the class structure of the capitalist society–ignoring the importance of new occupation, professions, and the middle class.

In practice, the Marxist utopia could not be achieved by the Communist States in the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe. The social inequality and exploitation remained in communist States also. The Communist States were characterised by dictatorship, police state, inefficiency and corruption. As a result not only the Communist States collapsed but even the dream of Marxism was shattered in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe.

Marx predicted that finally the intermediate strata, i.e., the middle class would disappear and there would be only two classes, i.e., capitalist and the working class. But a reverse process is visible whereby increasing numbers of affluent manual workers were entering the middle stratum and becoming middle-class. A middle mass society is emerging where the mass of the population is middle rather than the working class. This process is visible in both capitalist and communist societies.

In the Communist States as indicated by Djilas–a new class–consisting of communist leaders have emerged. The political power and higher opportunities are concentrated in this class. The class, structure and the domination of a new over the majority could not be eliminated in the communist states.

With an increasing emphasis upon multi-casual explanation of social problems, it has become difficult to provide an analysis by one cause alone, the economic, as Marx propounded in his economic determinism. Further, too much weight on 'ends' alone does not seem to be logical in a wholesome approach to various aspects of culture and social structure.

Societies under transformation are undergoing various processes of fission and fusion, cohesion and conflict which yield new consciousness and in consequence a different nature of social problems than found earlier. The consideration of time and space has now become significant in any integrated approach to social problems.

2.4.3 Review of the Gandhian Approach

Gandhian approach offers a critique of the existing order, propounds certain basic elements of a new society and provides a methodology for solving social problems. Critics have argued that Gandhian approach lacks originality and is a combination of the traditional Indian thinking, welfare policies and liberalism. It is idealistic and divorced from the rough nature of the social reality. An ideal State based on truth and non-violence with practice of austerity, sacrifice and moral standards seems to be utopian. The Gandhian method of 'Satyagraha' to fight against injustice has gradually found favour allover the world. It has been applied successfully by blacks in the USA and in South Africa and even by the people in the Eastern Europe to fight against communalism.

Activity 3

Write a note of one page on the functioning of any Gandhian Constructive Programme (such as Gandhi Ashram, the *Harijan Sewak Sangh* or the *Adim Jati Sewak Sangh* etc.)

2.5 THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL REALITY: DYSFUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

The activities and conditions which adversely affect the smooth functioning of society are termed as dysfunctional. In Sociology, this term was used by Merton. In all societies crime, delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, poverty and socio economic inequalities are regarded as 'dysfunctional'.

In contemporary society, there are several dysfunctional activities and conditions which operate at the global, national and local levels. These three levels of the dysfunctional aspects are closely linked with each other.

2.5.1 The Global Dysfunctions

There are several institutions which operate at the global level. After the First World War, the League of Nations was set-up to prevent future wars and to develop better understanding between the nations. It could not perform its functions effectively. Ultimately, the Second World War broke out in 1939. The First and the Second World Wars created a great deal of misery and

destruction. The threat of the cold war and the fear of the nuclear weapons were felt at the global level till the dismantling of the USSR. In the recent decades, the emergence of religious fundamentalism, increasing rate of unemployment, slow growth of economy, manifestation of global terrorism have been the prominent global challenges.

In a globalised world it is very difficult to assure that social problems are confined to the national boundaries. However, there are certain problems which are specific to certain nations predominantly. In this context, we may pinpoint some of the dysfunctions and problems which are visible in India at the national level. The religion as an institution is supposed to spread brotherhood and amity among the human beings. Unfortunately, in India, religious divisions have led to the dysfunctional aspects of communalism. Consequently it has become a victim of religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

Similarly, there are certain specific problems of Indian society such as poverty, untouchability, casteism and corruption, which at times changes the foundation of Indian democracy.

2.5.2 The Local Dysfunctions

There are certain dysfunctional conditions of Indian society confined to certain localities, regions and the States. For example, terrorist activities are concentrated in Kashmir and the North-east. Similarly there are other forms of ethnic violence, gender based social discrimination, conservatism etc. as the localised forms of dysfunctional activities.

The moot question is how and why such dysfunctional conditions emerge in Society. The different societies have their specific contextual problems. There is a difference in the socio-economic conditions of India, Western Europe and North America and thus there is a difference in social problems faced by these societies.

The dysfunctions in a society are closely linked with the socio-economic and political transformations. The Western industrial capitalist societies which receive their ideological support for the functional theory are facing the challenge of the rising curves of crimes, delinquency, alcoholism, loneliness, sex offences, mental breakdown, increasing rate of divorce and economic inequality. Similarly, in the former Soviet Russia and in the Eastern Europe, where during the last seven decades, a concerted effort was made to transform and the free society from exploitation, dehumanisation, alienation and socio-economic inequality, these dreams have been shattered. The Indian Society, where Gandhi made his experiments of truth, non-violence and moral order, is also facing the challenges of rising violence, terrorism, crime and corruption.

In the light of these facts, there is a need to examine alternative paradigms which claim to transform and to reorganise society to make it free from tensions, conflicts, social problems and disorganisation.

2.6 THE PARADIGMS OF TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Of late, the concept of paradigm is often used in social science. The literal meaning of this word is 'inflexions of word tabulated as an example' or 'to

express grammatical relationship between different words' or 'bend' or 'curves'. Thus the concept of paradigm has come in social sciences from grammar. For the first time, in social sciences, the theoretical and philosophical formulation of the concept of 'paradigm' was made by Thomas S. Kuhn in his book the 'Structure of Scientific Revolution', 1962. In Social Sciences, this concept is used to mean a major shift or revolution in ideas or the emergence of new traditions of thought in the place of the old one after vigorous discussions and debates. Thus paradigm indicates towards the radical transformation of ideas.

During the last two hundred years, a great deal of debate has been going on about the patterns of social, economic, and political development and transformation. In this process, there were shifts in idea, replacement of one ideology by the other. In modern terminology, it may be regarded as paradigm–shifts or in the place of the old paradigms, the emergence of new paradigms of development. We can divide these paradigms of transformation and development in the following categories:

- the liberal capitalist,
- the communist,
- the democratic socialist, and
- the Indian experiments and the Gandhian Paradigm

2.6.1 The Liberal - Capitalist Paradigm

The Liberal industrial democracy generated new thought patterns which were completely different from the ideas of the earlier periods. The major emphasis of this paradigm was on democracy, political freedom, free enterprise, industrialisation, modern technology and mass production. The social economic and political consequences of the application of these ideas were democratic state, large scale industrialisation, migration from villages to cities, unprecedented urbanisation in Europe and North America followed by anonymity, impersonal relationship and the decline of the traditional mechanism of social control.

The democratic capitalist societies have succeeded in providing a minimum standard of living to their citizens and a good deal of political freedom. At the same time, the developed and industrialised societies are suffering from crime, white collar criminality, fear of war, juvenile delinquency, anomie, mental health problems, discrimination based on race and growing apathy. They have not succeeded in solving the problem of poverty and gender discrimination. The race riots in the USA in 1992 are some of the examples of the growing racial hatred. The similar trends of manifest or latent racial hatred are visible in England, Germany and France also.

2.6.2 The Communist Paradigm

The Communist Paradigm of the social and economic transformation is primarily based on the theories of Marx and Lenin. The ideology of communism is opposed to the ideology of capitalism. Its major emphasis is on collectivity, control over the means of production by the Communist State, dictatorship of the proletariat and the utilisation of the means of production and resources for benefit of the working class. In his classical analysis, Marx was of the view

that the capitalist system of production has generated problems of class conflict, exploitation, social and economic inequality, suppression of the working class their alienation from the ownership of the means of the production.

Communism claimed to offer an alternative social, political and economic system. It was supposed to eliminate the social problems produced by the capitalist system. The Communism as an alternative paradigm was practiced in the Soviet Russia from the year 1917 to 1991, in China, since 1949, in most of the countries of the Eastern Europe from 1945 to 1991, in Vietnam since 1945 and in Cuba since 1955. The communist societies suffered from a number of socio-political problems such as dictatorship, lack of freedom, large scale corruption, inefficiency, growing divorce, alarming rate of abortions, loneliness and fear psychosis. The Communist system could not fully solve the problems of poverty, lack of a minimum level of quality of life etc. As a result, communism has collapsed not only in soviet Russia but in the whole of Eastern Europe, also.

2.6.3   The Paradigm of the Democratic Socialism

A group of perceptive thinkers, particularly Fabians in England and some others in Germany and France had a critical view on the claims of communism, since the last quarter of the 19th Century. They thought that the capitalism and communism, were equally incapable of meeting the challenges posed by the industrial, technological revolution. Capitalism cannot provide economic freedom and communism cannot offer political freedom. Both systems equally degrade human dignity. The new society can be created only when men are free from social economic and political inequalities.

In several Western European countries, the socialists and the labour parties were in power after the First World War. The Labour party in Britain and the social democrats in Sweden and Germany tried to apply the ideals of the democratic socialism in their countries. In concrete terms, their social, political and economic ideals took the shape of a number of social security measures such as the nationalisation of major industries in Britain, France, Sweden, and Germany, security of jobs, *employment*, minimum wages, health scheme to provide medical facilities and educational reforms to protect the interests of the working class.

Inspite of the policy of the intervention by the State, the problems of crime, delinquency, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, drug addiction, sex crimes, unemployment, alcoholism, growing divorce and prostitution etc. could not be solved in Sweden, Britain, France and Germany where democratic socialist were in power at one or the other period.

2.6.4   The Indian Experiments and Gandhian Paradigm

The policy of democratic socialism along with mixed economy and the Gandhian ideology was followed by the independent India State after 1947.

In the ideal Gandhian paradigm of social transformation, there is a little scope for the State, since, it represents brute force. The Gandhian paradigm plans to make a society based on the decentralisation of power and economy, self-sufficient village community and a moral order rooted in truth and non-violence. In independent India, the Gandhian emphasis on the Village Panchayats,

reconstruction of villages, the legal measures against untouchability and the revitalisation of the cottage industries were adopted. India adopted the path of social and economic transformation with emphasis on community development, removal of poverty, planned agricultural and industrial development, protective discrimination in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the upliftment of the socially and educationally backward classes. The concerted effort was made to improve health, education, and social security measures for the benefit of the underprivileged people.

The problems of poverty, ill health, slum conditions in the urban centres, illiteracy, increasing drug addiction, alcoholism, untouchability, growing terrorism and violence have not been solved as yet in India. In this context, we have to keep in mind that these problems cannot be solved only by the intervention of the State. The machinery of the State has got its own limitations.

2.7 LIMITATIONS OF STATE INTERVENTION

In the modern period, State has emerged as a powerful institution. This process started in Europe in the 17th Century with a gradual decline in the power of the Church and separation between the powers of the Church and the State. This process has passed through the following two phases:

● the policy of the Laissez-Faire,

● the rise of the Collectivist Ideologies.

2.7.1 The Policy of the Laissez-Faire

In the 19th Century, there was more emphasis on the policy of 'laissez-faire' which refers to the minimum interference by the State in day to day affairs of its citizen. The major concern of the State should be only the enforcement of law and order and State should not involve itself with welfare measures to protect the interests of its citizens. Every person understands his or her own interests.

2.7.2 The Collectivist Ideologies

Under the impact of the Collectivist ideologies – propagated by Communists, Socialists and the Fascists, there was growing emphasis on the role of the State in combating social problems and in promoting social welfare measures. After the great depression of 1929, even the capitalist State like the USA, the U.K. and France intervened to regulate economy and market. Certain special measures were taken by these States to control unemployment and the closures of factories.

The State is the most powerful institution and undoubtedly its roles are very significant in controlling violence, communalism, social discrimination and in promoting social security and welfare.

2.7.3 Limitations

The policy of the laissez-faire has been discorded even by the capitalist States. The State has tried to intervene in many areas particularly after 1919. Similarly, the Collectivist ideologies of the State intervention has also not succeeded.

There are limitations of the State intervention. The social problems can be more effectively checked by social consciousness, sense of participation, on the part of citizens and the sense of responsibility on the part of the public. The efforts of State will not be effective unless welfare measures are accepted by society. Thus, we have to keep in mind that the measures initiated by states have their limits. Society and State combined together can effectively sort out challenges posed by social problems, trends of disorganisation and pathological conditions.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Describe the major inadequacies of (a) the functional, and (b) the Marxist approaches in four lines each.

   a) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

   b) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

2) What is the meaning of Paradigm?

   a) ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

2.8   LET US SUM UP

This unit starts with an introductory remark showing the relationship between social transformation and social problems. The early and the modern approaches to the understanding of social problems and their differences are mentioned in this unit. You have also learnt, in somewhat details, about the Functional, the Marxist and the Gandhian approaches and their inadequacies. The paradigms of transformation and problems generated by them have also been described. Finally, we have thrown some light in this unit on limitations of State intervention in finding solution to social problems.

2.9 KEY WORDS

Anomie	:	For the first time this term was used by Emile Durkheim to indicate normlessness in a society and the lack of society in individuals. In such a situation, an individual or a group is not in a position to decide what should be done or what should not be done.
Dysfunction	:	The consequences of an event or action which adversely affects the functioning, unity and stability of a society.
Satyagraha	:	Peaceful and truthful resistance to injustice.
Paradigm	:	The literal meaning of this term is 'inflections of a word' or a grammatical relationship between different words. It was used for the first time in Social Science by Thomas S. Kuhn in 1962 to mean major shifts in ideas.
Collective Consciousness	:	The French counterpart of this term 'La Conscience Collective' was used by Emile Durkheim to mean common beliefs and accepted norms of a society which promote social solidarity.
Alienation	:	Means estrangement, separation or to find oneself as a stranger in a situation. This term was used by Hegel but was developed as a sociological concept by Karl Marx.
Capitalism	:	An economic system characterised by private ownership of the means of production, competition, free market and a strong profit motive.
Communism	:	A social philosophy represented by the public ownership of the economic services and the material resources of production. It believes in strong state control and the dictatorship of the proletariat class.
Disorganisation	:	A break in the social order or in its activities.

2.10 FURTHER READINGS

Jonathan H. Turner, 1987; *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, Fourth Edition, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Kenneth Henry, 1978; *Social Problems: Institutional and Interpersonal Perspectives*, Scott, Fopresman and Company, Illinois, London.

Robert K. Merton, Robert Nisbet, 1976; *Contemporary Social Problems*, Hercourt Brace Iovanovich, International Editing, New York, Chicago.

2.11 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Urban Industrial Social Structure is characterised by rapid social transformation, cities, high technology, modern productions, consumerism, rapid means of transport and communication, migration, mobility and anonymit, a secondary groups and impersonal relationships.

ii) a)   Cesar Becaris (1786), Italy

  b)   Jereme Bentham (1823), U.K.

iii) Cesane Lambroso (183601909), Italy

iv) ●   Earlier understanding of crime and other social problems was based on superstitions and ignorance.

  ●   the Classical and the Physical — Constitutional approaches are only of historical importance, today, their focus is on individuals.

  ●   they have not made adequate emphasis on the social, economic and cultural factors.

Check Your Progress 2

i)   Dysfunction is the consequence of an even or action which adversely affects the functioning, unity and stability of a society. This concept curbs this tendency towards the doctrine that everythins in a society works for harmony and integration. A social dysfunction is a specific inadequacy of particular part of the system for meeting a functional requirement.

ii) To Merton, functions and social problesm have both subjective as well as objective aspects. Mainfest functions are apparent and objective, whereas, the latent functions are hidden and subjective. Laten social problems refer to conditions which are at odd with current interest and values but are not generally recognised as being so.

Check Your Progress 3

i)   According to marx, the Capitalist System is beset by a number of social problems, such as:

  ●   inherent contradictions,

  ●   exploitation of many by man,

  ●   alienation of workers from their own products,

  ●   dehumanisation, poverty and inequality.

According to Marx, socio-econom inequality is a major problem of the capitalist system where the emphasis is not on the human need but on the human capacity.

ii) Gandhian ideology emphasised on the creation of a moral order – based on truth and non-violent. In this order, there is a little scope for the State. Gandhi strongly believes in the decentralisation of power and economy. His main instrument to fight against injustice is *Satyagrah*. Gandhi mobilised relentlessly against untouchability and alcoholism in India.

Check Your Progress 4

i) a) The functional approach does not keep in view the contradictions existing in society and the clash of interests between the different groups and classes. It treats an effect as a cause. It provides a deterministic view of human action. The functionalists portray social system as an active agent, whereas in reality, only human beings act.

b) Marxism as a theory has over-emphasised the role of material forces and conflict. It has over-simplified the calss structre of the capitalist society. In practice, the Marxist Utopia could not be achieved by the Communist State.

ii) The literal meaning of this term is teh 'inflections of words or 'a grammatical relationship between different words'. It was used for the first time in social Sciences by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 to mean major shift or revolution in ideas after a great deal of debates and discussions.

iii) a) the liberal Capitalist,
b) the communist,
c) the democratic Socialist,
d) the Ganhian.

UNIT 3   SOCIAL PROBLEMS: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the relationship between social transformation and social problems in the Indian context from a historical point of view;

- describe the linkage between the structural transformation and social problems;

- explain the relationship between social factors and social problems; and

- point out the nature of the State intervention to deal with these problems in India.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we propose to discuss 'Social Problems: The Indian Context'. There are certain unique features of the Indian Society. Indian Society, even today, maintains continuity with her remote past. The Social institutions such as *Varnashram*, Caste, joint family system and village communities emerged in the early phase of India society which are also responsible for several of the social problems in the modern period. India has been a multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and multi-regional society, since time immemorial. These diversities of Indian society have made significant cultural contributions and certainly they are a source of strength to the rich cultural heritage of India. But at the same time, they have often posed a number of problems to the social, cultural and political cohesiveness of Indian society.

3.2 TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

We have discussed the theoretical relationship between social transformation and social problems in the Unit-1 of this course. The present unit provides an opportunity to understand this relationship with special reference to India.

In this context, we have to keep in mind the following aspects of transformation and their relationship with social problems:

- historical, and

- structural.

The historical understanding of transformation and its relationship with social problems may be divided in the following two parts:

- understanding social problems through different historical phases, i.e., ancient, medieval and modern (upto the 19th century) periods,

- social problems in the contemporary period.

3.2.1 Social Problems: Historical Phases

The Indian society, being part of an ancient civilisation, has passed through different historical phases. The *Vedic* period in India sowed the seeds of a

civilisation – characterised by the emergence of sophisticated philosophy, religion, astrology, science and medicine. Its institutional base centered around *Varnashram* and caste, emphasis on rituals, higher position of ritual performers over others and the sacrifice of animals. The following were the major social problems in the early phase of the Indian civilisation.

- conflict between the two major social groups, i.e., the Aryans and the *Dasas Dasyu* as mentioned in the Vedic texts.

- increasing rigidity of social hierarchy,

- emphasis on the observance of rituals,

- sacrifice of animals.

Jainism and Budhism emerged as a protest against these practices. It is to be noted that during the Vedic and the post-Vedic periods, the social position of Women was quite high. The child marriages were not common in this period.

India's contact with Islam has passed through the phases of conflict, gradual accommodation, increasing synthesis and the revival of communal antagonism. With the advent of the Muslim rule in India, two major trends were visible in the Indian Society:

i) The first was the trend of the growing insularity and attitude of avoidance towards others.

    This strengthened the notion of the purity – pollution and practice of untouchability. The rigid restrictions on the sea - voyage were imposed on the people in this period. As a consequence, firstly, it reduced the spirit of enterprise and adventure among the Indians. Secondly, it minimised contacts of Indians with the outside world.

ii) During the early phase of invasions and conflicts, the practice of *Sati* and the child-marriage developed as a defense mechanism among the Hindus. Only a small section of the Muslim population immigrated to India from Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and the Arab countries. The rest of them were local people who accepted Islam. Due to contacts with Hinduism and conversion, the Muslim in India were also influenced by caste-system. Thus, the social hierarchies were introduced even among the Muslims in India.

iii) The second trend was in the form of the emulation of the customs of the Muslim rulers by the elite and section of the upper caste Hindus. This encouraged the adoption of the practice of *Pardah* (veil to cover the face) by the upper caste women in north India.

In the medieval period, the *Bhakti* movement, reassert the humanist elements of the Indian civilisation by preaching equality, speaking against rituals, the caste rigidity and untouchability. The practices of untouchability, child marriage, *sati*, infanticide, organised *thagi* (cheating) increased in the Indian Society particularly during the declining phase of the Mughal empire. Even the religious beliefs encouraged the addiction of tobacco, hashish and opium.

By the early part of the 19th Century, the colonial administration in India was fully established. After 1820, it adopted a reformist zeal. There were several

social reform programmes to eradicate the practices of *Sati* and the *Thagi* – widely prevalent during this period.

In the early 19th Century, the questions related to the social problems of *sati*, remarriage of widows, spread of modern education, evils of child marriage and of untouchability were raised by social reformers.

In the 19th century, there were four major reform movements:

- Brahmosamaj–led by Raja Rammohan Roy,

- Aryasamaj–led by Swami Dayanand Sarawati,

- Prarthana Samaj–led by Mahadeva Govind Ranade,

- Ramakrishna Mission–inspired by Ramkrishna Paramhansa and led by Swami Vivekanand.

These reform movements opposed the practice of untouchability, *Sati*, infanticide and propagated in favour of the remarriage of widows and the modern education. Due to the tireless efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy, the practice of *Sati* was legally abolished in 1829. The *Arya Samaj* contributed significantly in weakening the caste-rigidity and reducing the practice of untouchability in the Punjab, Haryana and the Western Uttar Pradesh. The activities of the *Prarthana Samaj* were mainly confined to the Bombay Presidency. The Ram Krishna Mission contributed significantly in the field of educations and health services..

3.2.2 Social Problems: Contemporary Phase

In contemporary India, there are several social problems. Though, they are called as social problems, yet, in some problems socio-cultural overtones are more prominent, whereas, in some others, the economic and legal overtones are conspicuous. Thus, the contemporary social problems may be classified in the following categories:

i) socio-cultural problems: communalism, untouchability, population explosion, child-abuse, problems of the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the backward classes, women, alcoholism and drug addiction,

ii) economic problems: poverty, unemployment, black money;

iii) Legal problems: crime, delinquency, violence, terrorism.

These classifications are only the purpose of narration. They are closely interrelated with each other. Poverty is an economic as well as a social problem. Similarly, communalism is closely linked with economic factors. The crime and delinquency are having legal overtones but they are closely related to the social and economic factors.

As there were organised social movements against social problems in the previous phases of the Indian society, similarly, concerted social and political movements were launched in the contemporary period against communalism, casteism, untouchability, illiteracy, alcoholism and drug addiction. Gandhi– as the leader of the national movement after 1919, devoted a considerable part of his action-programme for the uplift of *Harijans*, *Adivasis* and Women. He

tried to reorganise education and village industries. He fought relentlessly against communalism, untouchability and alcoholism.

In the contemporary period, there are organised movements of women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backwards castes and labour to protect their interests. There are voluntary organisations working against ecological degradation, drug addiction and child abuse in India.

3.2.3   Structural Transformation and Social Problems

Several attempts have been made to understand Indian social problems in terms of structural transformation. In the Indian context, the following three patterns of transformation are visible:

- Sanskritisation,
- Westernisation,
- Modernisation.

Sanskritisation is a process through which lower castes achieved upward social mobility either by adventure or by emulating the customs and rituals of the upper castes. It is a cultural process but changes in social status and occupations as a consequence of the upward mobility brought about by sanskritisation makes it also a structural process.

The contact with the West, particularly with England, set in motion another process of transformation in India known as Westernisation. It is characterised by Western patterns of administration, legal system and education through the medium of the English language. Under the impact of the Western way of life, a sizeable section of educated and urbanised Indian adopted Western style of dress, food,drink, speach and manners. The emulation of the West inculcated the values of Western democracy, industrialisation and capitalism. There are cultural as well as structural aspects of Westernisation. It brought about structural changes by the growth of modern occupations related with modern education,economy and industry, emergence of urban centres with the introduction of colonial administration and the rise of urban middle class under the impact of education, administration, judiciary and press. As explained earlier, modernisation and westernisation are closely related in the Indian context. The major components of modernisation such as education, political participation, urbanisation, migration, mobility, money, market, modern technology, communication-network and industrilisation were introduced by the colonial administration. They received an impetus in the post-independence period. The independent India adopted a modern constitution, founded a secular democratic state and followed the policy of planned socio-economic development, democratic decentralisation and the policy of protective discrimination for the weaker sections.

The real question is how these patterns of structural transformation have generated social problems in India? Inspite of several contradictions existing in Indian society, revolution, as defined by Marxists and as explained in Unit 1, did not take place in India. The processes of transformation–represented by sanskritisation, westernisation and modernisation have been, by and large, smooth and gradual in the Indian context.

3.2.4 Structural Breakdown and Inconsistencies

The following two concepts may help us in understanding the relationship between structural transformation and social problems:

- structural breakdown, and

- structural inconsistencies.

The concept of the 'structural breakdown' has been used by Talcott Parsons to mean the systemic rigidity which tries to resist or retard social transformation and thus leads to the breakdown of the system or the social disorganisation. In the Third World Countries, there is a growing urge for modernisation in the post-independence period. These countries borrowed parliamentary democracy, adult franchise, modern constitution without the supporting structural base of economy, industrialisation, modern technology, literacy and normative base of rationality, civic culture and secular values. As a result, in several of the ex-colonial societies – democracy could not function successfully. The ethinic, communal, tribal, caste and regional aspirations have become so strong that they are eroding even the basic structures of democracy, modern state and civic society. This is so obvious in the case of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and in many countries of Africa. The impact of social transformation on the Indian society is visible in the following manner.

- on the one hand, three patterns of transformation as mentioned earlier, has created new problems of adjustment,

- on the other hand, occasionally, the process of social transformation has been resisted. In this context, we may cite the examples of the resistance of the urge of the upward social mobility of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, denial of the rightful claims of women, and obstructing land reforms by hook or crook.

In the Indian context, structural inconsistencies are also visible. They are symptoms as well as the cause of social disorganisation and social problems. By structural inconsistencies is meant the existence of two opposite sub-structures within the same structure which are not consistent with each other. In India, on the one hand, there are highly sophisticated modern metropolitan upper and upper middle classes influenced by consumerism. On the other hand, there is a large number of the Indian people who live in inaccessible tribal and rural areas and who might have not seen even a train. A small section of the Indian society belongs to the jet age, whereas, a large Indian population even today depend on the bullock-cart. This situation is the clear indicator of the gap between the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban creating a gulf between the different groups and strata. These structural inconsistencies are the indicators of poverty, inequality, inaccessibility and deprivation existing in Indian society.

3.2.5 The Soft State

Gunnar Myrdal in his book '*Asian Drama*' discusses the problems posed by modernisation in several Asian countries – including India. He feels that strong states, effective governments with their capacity to take hard decisions and strict enforcement of the rule of law are the major features of modern European

society but in South Asian countries in general and in India in particular, an approach is being followed by the ruling elite in the post-independence period which has been termed as the policy of 'soft-state' by Myrdal. The democratisation of polity has further strengthened this policy. It has weakened the capacity of state in enforcing the rule of law. As a result, there is an increasing rate of crime, violence, terrorism, violation of law, corruption in the public life and the criminalisation of politics.

Check Your Progress 1

i)   Describe the major social problems in the following historical phases in India.

    a)   ancient

        ....

        ....

    b)   medieval

        ....

        ....

    c)   modern

        ....

        ....

    d)   contemporary

        ....

        ....

ii)   Name the four major reform movements of the 19th century.

    a)   ....

    b)   ....

    c)   ....

    d)   ....

iii) Mention three major forms of transformations in India.

    a)   ....

    b)   ....

    c)   ....

3.3 SOCIAL FACTORS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Social problem is a situation that objectively exists in particular society and is subjectively accepted as undesirable by that society. Social problem therefore, is relative to society or has a social context. Hence, study of social problems requires understanding of their social contexts.

The social context may be discussed in a historical or structural perspective. Earlier, we have explained how in various historical phases in India, the different

types of social problems emerged. Now, let us try to understand the major social factors which are associated with various problems.

3.3.1 Major Social Factors

Study of Indian social problems – their emergence and persistence in Indian society – requires understanding of the Indian social situation in which the problems exist. One has to analyse the social factors that are relevant to the understanding of social problems in India. Some of the major factors that constitute the social context in India, as far as social problems are concerned, are as follows:

- heterogeneity of Indian population,

- cultural elements,

- economy, poverty and education,

- state and polity,

- urbanisation and industrialisation.

3.4 HETEROGENEITY OF INDIAN POPULATION

India is a heterogeneous society – where there are several religions, castes, linguistic and tribal groups. The heterogeneous nature of the Indian population has been the cause of a number of social problems in India.

3.4.1 Religion

The multi-religious nature of society and conflict among the different religions has given rise to the problem of communalism in India. The phenomenon of communalism, as a vitiated form of inter-religious group relationship, particularly between Hindus and Muslims is a grave problem in India. It has its historical linkage with the Muslim invasions in India, early conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, British rule and policy of encouraging communal-divide, competition for political power, service and resources.

Gradually, the problem of communalism has affected the Hindu-Sikh relationship also. There is a sizeable group of Sikhs in India. They are concentrated in a relatively developed region (Punjab) of the country. Their existence as a powerful community in the region and as a minority in the larger nation is to be taken into consideration in understanding the emergence of communal politics followed by terrorism in Punjab. In this context it must be noted that by and large both Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab have shown a great deal of understanding and amity even in the midst of terrorism. The Indian concept of secularism accepts all religions as equal and does not discriminate one religion against another. As indicated by Myrdal, the policy of a 'soft state' and not taking hard decisions against communal organisations has also aggravated problems of communalism in India. The considerations of electoral gains by using religions have also contributed in the growth of communalism in the post-independent period of India.

3.4.2 Caste

Another element of Indian social structure is the caste system. The Caste system has been divided Indian population into numerous groups that enter into relationships of various types and degrees among them. It has been the root cause of various social problems in India. The Casteism as a problem refers to both the discrimination of one caste against another and the particularistic tendency of favouring one's caste group in violation of the principle of universalism. The practice of mobilisation on the basis of caste and favour or disfavour shown in education and employment on caste considerations are the major features of casteism. One may justify caste criterion for welfare programmes in favour of the weaker sections in India social situation. At the same time, such welfare measures have generated tensions and conflicts that exhibit casteist tendencies.

The caste system has had its adverse impact on education in India. Traditionally, caste determined the eligibility of the people for education. In the traditional system, education was considered to be the prerogative of the upper castes. Steeped in this tradition of reserving pursuit of knowledge to the upper castes, the masses did not receive education. This is one of the reasons for the problem of widespread illiteracy in India.

3.4.3 Language

Another aspect of Indian society is that of the existence of several languages which often leads to conflicts between the different linguistic groups. India has recognised the socio-political reality of language by reorganising the states on the basis of language which has encouraged the assertion of linguistic identities. It may also be noted that as a nation, India has not been able to have a national language that is acceptable to all and that effectively serves as the link language. For historical reasons, English continues to be the link language for the purpose of higher education, administration and diplomacy. In this context, there is a two-fold relationship:

- at the national level, there is the question of the relationship between English and Hindi.

- at the State level, there is the question of the relationship between English, Hindi an the regional languages.

The situation arising out of this peculiar linguistic configuration has created the problems of linguistic minorities in several states, border dispute between states, and the question of the medium of instruction in educational institutions. All these issues have repercussions on national integration. They have generated tensions an conflicts.

3.4.4 Tribes

India is a country with large population of tribals. Tribals in India are not a homogeneous group. They differ in terms of their ways of life, exposure to the outside world and adoption of the programmes of welfare and development. The tribals have been isolated from the mainstream of the Indian society for several years which accounted for their backwardness. In addition, they have

been subjected to various types of exploitation by the non-tribals with whom they have come into contact. While the non-tribals exploited the tribals for economic gains, the tribals are facing the phenomenon of detribalisation which refers to the loss or degeneration of the tribal culture and way of life. In this context, the main problems of Indian tribes are backwardness, exploitation, detribalisation, ethnic tensions, various kinds of tribal movements and tribal insurgency in certain parts of India.

3.4.5 Minorities

The heterogeneity of the Indian population has given rise to the problem of minorities in India. The major minority groups that have been identified in India are religious and linguistic. While religious minorities can be considered to exist at the national level, linguistic minorities have their relevance at the state level. Apart from religious and linguistic minority, caste and tribal groups may assume the status of minorities group in the context of inter-group relationships in particular situations.

3.4.6 Population Explosion

Another social factor that has implications of social problems in India is the phenomenon of population explosion. The population in India has been growing phenomenally during this century. Development and welfare programmes for the masses have not been able to catch up with the increasing population. Consequently, the benefits of the developmental programmes gained by the masses whose number is ever increasing, have been far below the expectation.

With the increase in population, the problems of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy has been accentuated in India. In absolute terms the number of people who are affected by these problems have been increasing. The sheer size of the population is also a factor that affects the increasing ethnic problem of various kinds. The larger the size of the caste or the tribe, the greater is the tendency to assert their parochial or ethnic identities at the cost of national integration.

In the population of India, there is a considerable number of the physically handicapped also. They are dependent on society at large for their survival. The country does not have enough institutions to take care of the various needs of the physically handicapped. Many of them turn to streets as beggars which is another social problem.

The increasing population of India is making increasing demands on the resources of the land, capital and forest. With the growing population, the hunger for land in both rural and urban areas is increasing. With the growing burden on the national finance, the welfare programmes and social services like education, health, employment, rural development, welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward castes, youth and women etc. are adversely affected. The needs of fuel, timbers and the hunger of land for cultivation and habitation are steadily depleting the forest resources. The increasing denudation of the forest areas is creating various kinds of environmental problems in the country. The adverse consequences of the ecological imbalance created by deforestation are visible in the changing pattern of rains, increasing soil erosion, floods, scarcity of fodder for animals and firewood for poor people.

Box 3.01. Socio–demographic Profile of States in India							
State/UT	Persons	Growth rate	Sex ratio	Density	Literacy Rate		
		1991-01			T	M	F
India	1,027,015,247	21.34	933	324	65.37	75.85	54.16
J & K	10,069,917	29.04	900	99	54.46	65.75	41.82
Himachal	6,007,248	17.53	970	103	77.13	86.02	68.8
Punjab	24,289,296	19.76	874	482	69.95	75.63	63.55
Chandigarh	900,914	40.33	773	7903	81.76	85.65	76.65
Uttarachal	8,479,562	19.20	964	159	72.28	84.01	60.26
Haryana	21,082,989	28.06	861	477	68.59	79.25	56.31
Delhi	13,782,957	46.31	821	9294	81.82	87.37	75.0
Rajasthan	56,473,112	28.33	922	165	61.03	76.46	44.34
Uttar Pradesh	166,052,859	25.80	898	389	57.36	70.23	42.9
Bihar	82,878,796	28.43	921	880	47.53	60.32	33.6
Sikkim	540,493	32.98	875	76	69.68	76.73	61.49
Arunachal	1,091,117	26.21	901	13	54.74	64.07	44.24
Nagaland	1,988,636	64.41	909	120	67.11	71.77	61.92
Manipur	2,388,634	30.02	978	107	68.87	77.87	59.7
Mizoram	981,058	29.18	938	42	88.49	90.6	86.0
Meghyalaya	2,306,069	29.94	975	103	63.31	66.14	60.41
Assam	26,638,407	18.85	932	340	64.28	71.9	56.30
West Bengal	80,221,171	17.84	934	904	69.22	77.58	60.22
Jharkhand	26,909,428	23.19	941	338	54.13	67.9	39.4
Orissa	36,706,920	15.94	972	236	63.61	76.0	51.0
Chhatisgarh	20,795,956	18.06	990	154	65.2	77.8	52.4
Madhya Pradesh	60,385,118	24.34	620	158	64.09	76.7	50.3
Gujrat	50,596,992	22.48	921	258	69.97	80.50	58.60
Daman & Diu	158,059	55.59	709	1411	81.1	88.4	70.4
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	220,451	59.20	811	449	60.3	76.3	43.0
Maharastra	96,752,247	22.57	922	314	77.27	86.27	67.5
Andhra Pradesh	75,727,541	13.86	978	275	61.11	70.85	51.17
Karnataka	52,733,958	17.25	964	275	67.04	76.3	57.49
Goa	1,343,998	14.89	960	363	82.32	88.9	75.5
Lakshadweep	60,595	17.19	947	1894	87.52	93.1	81.5
Kerala	31,838,619	9.42	1058	819	91.0	94.2	87.8
Tamil Nadu	62,110,839	11.19	986	478	73.5	82.3	64.5
Pondicherry	973,829	20.56	1001	2029	81.5	89.0	74.0
A&N Islands	356,265	26.94	846	43	81.2	86.0	75.3
Tripura	3,191,168	15.74	950	304	73.66	81.47	65.4
Source: *Census of India* 2001							

Check Your Progress 3

i)   Write in four lines on religion and politics.

....

....

....

....

ii) Describe the relationship between caste and education in four lines.

....

....

....

....

iii) Discuss the problem of language at the Centre and the State levels in four lines.

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....

iv) Mention problems of (a) tribes, and (b) minorities in three lines each.

a)   ....

....

....

b)   ....

....

....

v)   Mention five major consequences of population pressure.

a)   ....

b)   ....

c)   ....

d)   ....

e)   ....

3.5   CULTURAL ELEMENTS

There are certain cultural elements that have had their own contribution to the persistence of the certain social problems in India. The following cultural traits can be particularly identified in this context.

●   Fatalism,

- Particularism,

- Lack of regard for public property,

- Patriarchal system.

3.5.1 Fatalism

A cultural element that has been relevant to social problems in India is fatalism. The Hindu doctrines of "karma" and rebirth contain strong elements of fatalistic attitude to life–an attitude of acceptance of and resignation to the vicissitudes and failures in life. It has proved to be a one of the mechanisms for checking the resistance of the masses against of injustice and exploitation. Social practices such as untouchability, discrimination, bonded labour persisted in India for a long time almost unchallenged by those affected by them. It happened so because the affected people considered these practices as the result of their 'Karma' (action) of the previous birth and luck. The welfare and developmental programmes themselves get a setback on account of the apathy and indifference of the masses who are under the spell of religious fatalism.

3.5.2 Particularism

Another cultural trait widespread in Indian society is particularism as against universalism. This reflected in the excessive consideration for one's own people, kingroup, caste or religion. Often universalistic standards are set aside in one's decisions and actions. Corruption – involving favouritism or discrimination that is prevalent in our society is the result of such disregard for the norms of universalism. Some of the intergroup conflicts on the basis of caste, tribe, religion, language or region can also be attributed to the mobilisation based on sectional identities and particularism.

3.5.3 Attitude of Public Property

Another trait of the Indian society that has implications for corruption is the disregard for public property and money. There is a belief that Indians have inherited it as a legacy of the colonial rule. Unfortunately, this attitude seems to have continued to exist in India even after independence. This lack of respect for public property is one of the root causes of corruption, black money, tax-evasion, misappropriation of public goods and use of substandard material in public constructions.

3.5.4 Patriarchal System

As elsewhere in the world, the Indian society, by and large, has been patriarchal where woman is subjected to man. The role of woman in the Indian society has been conceived as that of wife and mother. The woman in India possesses a inferior social status to that of man.

The problem is further accentuated by the cultural need to have male offspring for perpetuating the family performing the rituals after one's death. It has contributed to the cultural preference for a male child and imposition of inferior status to the female. This had led to the subjugation of women and discrimination against them in various spheres of social life. The problems such as dowry, ill-treatment of the daughter-in-law, wife-beating , illiteracy,

occupational discrimination, social isolation, and psychological dependence, etc. faced by women have roots in this cultural preference for the male.

3.6 ECONOMY, POVERTY, EDUCATION

Economically, India remains predominantly an agricultural society. Naturally, there is an excessive dependence of labour force on agriculture. This over-dependence of the labour force on the underdeveloped agriculture is the major cause of many of the social problems in India. It directly leads to poverty which is one of the basic causes of many other social problems in India. The malnutrition, ill-health, beggary, prostitution, etc. are rooted in the large-scale poverty in India.

Indian society is characterised by the unequal distribution of wealth. One observes affluence amidst pervasive poverty in both the rural and urban area of India. On account of this disparity, benefits of development and welfare services also accrue unequally to the different sections of the society. The benefits that the poor gain are comparatively low. Consequently, the lot of the poor and the backward sections of the society has not improved as expected. There is a close linkage between economy, poverty and education. The illiteracy and education. The unplanned growth of higher education has created the problem of educated unemployment.

Some Aspects of Human Development in India

India is one of those countries who occupies a low rank in the Human Development Index. Some aspects of the Human Development Index (2000 view) of India is given below:

Box 3.02 Human Development Index				
1.	Life expectancy	63.3 yrs	2.	Adult Literacy rate (15 years and above) 57.2%
3.	Combined enrolment ratio	55%	4.	% of Population not using improved drinking water sources 12%
5.	Underweight children under age 5	47%	6.	% of people living below National Poverty Line 35.0%
7.	Annual Population growth rate	1.9%	8.	% of urban population 27.7%
9.	Population not using adequate sanitations facilities	69%	10.	Children underweight for age [under 5 years] 47%
11.	People Living with HIV/AIDS (2001)	0.79%		
Source: *UNDP*, 2003				

3.6.1 Child Labour

Child labour, a manifestation of poverty in the country has become a social problem in India. A large number of families belonging to the poor section of the society are forced to depend upon their children's contribution to the family income. They are not in a position to spare their children for full-time or even part-time schooling. Thus children who are expected to be in schools are found working as labourers.

Apart from the economic constraints of the families of the working children, the owners of some of the small-scale enterprises also prefer to employ child labour. For them, child labour is cheap. It reduces the cost of production and maximise their profit. Thus, child labour gets encouragement from both - the parents of the children and the owners of the enterprise. Therefore, despite the appalling conditions under which children work and the low wages they earn, child labour thrives in India.

Activity 1

Please prepare a report of two pages based on the monthly income and its sources of ten families living in your locality.

3.6.2 Illiteracy and Education

Widespread poverty has its own repercussions on education in India. The problem of mass-illiteracy in the country is largely by the result of the situation of poverty under which the masses live. The poor are so preoccupied with the concern for their survival that they do not have the inclination or time for education. It is ridiculous to convince a poor man about the value of education when he is struggling to make both ends meet. Most of the people belonging to the poor section are not inclined for schooling of their children. Many of those who enroll their children in schools withdraw them before they acquire any meaningful standard of literacy. The result is that India is faced with the problem of mass-illiteracy. Nearly 50 per cent of the country's population capable of acquiring literacy skills are still illiterate.

3.6.3 Educational System

The educational system affects the society at large in various ways. Education at the higher level in India has expanded indiscriminately in response to social demands and political pressures. Some of the major features of the educational system in India are as follows:

- widespread illiteracy,
- unachieved targets of the universalisation of education,
- lack of proper emphasis on the primary education,
- misplaced emphasis on higher education which is, by and large, poor in quality excepting institutes of technology, management, medicine and few colleges and universities in the metropolitan centres.

Consequently, there has been no attempt to see that the educational system at the higher level produced the manpower in quality and quantity that the economic system of the country could absorb. The net result of this unplanned expansion has been increased in the educated unemployment and underemployment. Here it is obviously the situation of the producing manpower in excess of the demand of the economic system or mismatch between educational and economy.

There is another kind of mismatch between education and economy in India. It is the situation wherein some of the highly qualified manpower produced by some of the educational institutions in India do not find the placement in the country rewarding enough. The result is the brain drain in which India loses what cream of its highly qualified manpower produced at a very heavy cost of public resources.

3.6.4 Industrialisation and Urbanisation

The process of industrialisation and urbanisation has been slow in India. Industrialisation has been concentrated in certain pockets in the country. The result is the inordinate growth of population in a few urban centres. This over-growth of population in a few urban centres has created various problems of – urban poverty, unemployment, congestion, pollution, slum, etc.

Rural poverty and unemployment have had their own contribution to the urban problem in so far as people migrated from the rural areas to the urban centres in numbers larger than the urban areas can absorb. As a large section of the rural migrants are illiterate and unskilled, they are unable to adjust themselves into the urban economic situation and thereby suffer from unemployment and poverty. Many of them resort to begging and some of these helpless people belonging to the female sex are forced to adopt prostitution for their living. Thus, while urbanisation and industrialisation are processes of development, they have their own adverse by-products in India in the form of various social problems.

3.7   STATE AND POLITY

The intervention of the State has been very significant either in the checking or in finding solution to the social problems in India. In the early colonial period, several steps were taken by the State to abolish the practice of *Sati* (1829) and to control *thagi*. In the later part of the 19th century steps were taken to provide legal opportunities for inter-community and inter-caste marriage. In 1929, the *Sarada Act* was passed to check child marriages. In the post-independence period, India resolved to constitute a democratic, sovereign, secular and socialist society. In the constitution, special provisions were made to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward classes, women and children.

The practice of untouchability was declared as an offence. Some special measures-such as the *Hindu Marriage Act and Succession Act* were adopted to reform the Hindu Society in general and the Hindu marriage system in particular. The welfare programmes have been launched for the uplift of youth, children, and physically handicapped. The Five Year Plans were launched for the socio-economic transformation of Indian Society. After 1970, special attention was paid towards the removal of poverty, rural development and generation of employment in the rural areas.

The impact of these programmes in visible on the socio-economic life of India. Despite considerable achievements, India is still beset with so many problems such as poverty, unemployment and sub-standard life conditions for a large section of Indian society. The turn taken by Indian polity and electoral process during the post-independence period is also responsible for several of our social problems.

3.7.1   Electoral Process

Politically, India has a multi-party parliamentary form of democracy. Ideally, political parties are to be organised on universalistic ideologies and the citizens are expected to choose their representatives on universalistic principles. In fact, particularistic tendencies play an important role in the electoral process of the country. One can find political parties formed on communal or parochial lines and political mobilisation undertaken by political parties and individuals on the basis of caste, religion, language and region. The political activities of

this sort are negation of the healthy democratic polity. They are also leading to sectional conflicts, atrocities against weaker sections, linguistic and religious minorities. Thus, the political functioning and the electoral process, as they exist today, are fomenting problems of communalism, casteism and conflicts between the different sections of society.

3.8   LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, first of all the relationship between social transformation and social problems has been discussed. The process of transformation has been explained in terms of historical as well as structural aspects in the Indian context. It has been followed by examining the relationship between social factors and social problems, cultural elements and social problems, economy, polity and social problems. Finally, we have discussed the role of the State in dealing with these problems, and the problems being generated by the actual functioning of the Indian polity.

3.9   KEY WORDS

Structural Breakdown	:	This concept was used by Talcott Parsons to mean the system of rigidity which tries to resist or retard social transformation and thus leads to breakdown of the social structure. The steps taken by the people against systematic rigidity in the form of collective mobilisation has been called by Marxists as revolution.
Structural Inconsistencies	:	This concept indicates the existence of two opposite sub-structures within the same structure which are not consistent with each other.
Soft-State	:	This concept has been used by Gunnar Myrdal in his book "The Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations'. By this concept he means the functioning of newly Independent Asian States which find difficulties in taking hard decisions to enforce the rule of law.

3.10   FURTHER READINGS

Ahuja Ram, 1992. *Social Problems in India*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.

Singh, Yogendra, 1988. *Modernisation of Indian Tradition*, Reprint, Rawat Publication, Jaipur.

3.11   SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) a) Caste distinctions, overemphasis on rituals over knowledge, rigid hierarchy, higher position of ritual performers, sacrifice of animals.

    b) Attitudes of avoidance, superstition, increased notion of purity and pollution, untouchability, child marriage, lower position of women, strict observance of widowhood.

    c) *Sati*, Widowhood, Child marriage, illiteracy, untouchability, *thagi*, superstitions.

d) Communalism, untouchability, population expolosion, problems of weaker section alcoholism, drug adiction poverty, unemployment, black money, crime, delinquency and violence.

2) Arya Samaj, Brahmasamaj, Prarthan Samajand Ramakrishna Mission.

3) Sanskritisation,
   Westernisation,
   Modernisation

Check Your Progress 2

1) The Indian Society is multi-religious in nature, During the colonial period, the relationship between different religious communities particularly between Hindust and Muslims was politicised. It encouraged a tendency known as communalism which as been strengthened by mutual suspicious idologies, competition for power, service and resources.

2) The education in the traditional Indian system was primarily confined to the upper castes. It has its adverse impact on the spread of mass education. This is one of the reasons for the widespread illiteracy in India.

3) English continues to be the link language in India for the purpose of higher education, administration and diplomacy. At the level of the centre, there is teh question of the relationship between English and Hindi for the purpose of the medium of instructions and administration and at the State level between English, Hindi and the regional languages.

4) a) There are several tribes in India and they comprise around seven per cent of India's population. They are not homogeneous in their customs. They are isolated and exploited and facing the problem of detribalisation.

   b) Thee are religious and linguistic minorities in india. Sometimes, castes and tribes may also be considered as minorities within specific areas.

5) a) Adverse effects on development and welfare programmes,
   b) Poverty,
   c) Illiteracy,
   d) Increased pressures on land, capital, forest and other resources.

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) Excessive consideration for one's own kin group, caste, tribe or religion,
   b) corruption-involving favouritism,
   c) discrimination,
   d) inter-group conflicts

2) This lack of respect for public property is one of the root-causes of corruption, black money, tax-evasion, misappropriation of fund and use of sub-standard materials in pubic constructions.

3) There is a close linkage between economy, poverty and education. The illiteracy in India is directly linked with poverty. There is a mis-match between economy and education in the Indian context.

4) In fact, particularistic tendencies play an important role in the electoral process of the country. Several political parties have been formed on communal and parochial lines. At the time elections, castes, religion, language and region play significant roles. This types of mobilistion is also responsible for many socio-economic problems in India.

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