# **UNIT 3 SIMPLE SOCIETIES**

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# 3.0 OBJECTIVES

After having read this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the main features of economy and social organisation in simple societies;
- explain the type of religion and political systems which exist in simple societies;
   and
- discuss the impact of colonialism on simple societies.

# 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'simple societies' refers to small-scale societies with a relatively simple technology. Such societies are not only small-in size but also their control over the environment is quite limited. With small-scale markets, their scope for specialisation in the division of labour is restricted.

All tribal societies can be called simple in terms of their limited technological control over the environment. Their economies are, generally, based on the mode of production of material goods for subsistence. Most such societies around the world have interesting systems of exchange, which intervene between production and consumption of material goods.

With their distinct types of socio-political organisations, tribal societies all over the world present a striking contrast to the societies in which we live. Many tribal groups are, now, caught in the process of acquiring advance technologies. They can be called 'transitional'. Most transitional societies have experienced colonial rule by Europeans.

In this unit, you will, first, read about the main features of economies and systems of exchange in simple societies. Then, you will look at how these societies are socially and politically organised and how natural phenomena predominate in their religious belief-systems. Finally, you will learn about the impact of colonial rule on simple societies.

# 3.2 ECONOMIES IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

Simple societies are spread over nearly the entire range of natural environments and are not confined only to one or two regions. They are found in the dense equatorial and tropical forests, in the hot and cold deserts and in the rich alluvial plains. They are found also in the foothills and high ranges of mountains, in the savannas, sea coasts and in the islands jutting out of the open seas. The diversity of natural environment has resulted in the diversity of economies practised by such societies. Given the simple technology, the impact of the natural environment is considerable. But the simple societies, even with their simple technology, have everywhere shown an indomitable spirit to face the harsh nature.

Based on the mode of production of material goods for subsistence, economies in simple societies can be grouped into the following types: a) Hunting and gathering; b) Pastoral; c) Shifting cultivation; and d) Settled cultivation.



Simple Society: Making a Fire

# 3.2.1 Hunting and Gathering

Hunting and gathering societies live by hunting large and small game and by collecting a wide variety of roots, fruits, and tubers. Despite the similarity in the relationship with nature, the hunting and gathering societies differ a great deal among themselves, depending upon the habitat and the animals they hunt.

All these hunting and gathering societies live close to nature and (rather than adapting nature to themselves) they adapt themselves to nature. Following this principle, they keep on moving from place to place in search of animals, fruits, roots and tubers.

It was generally believed by early anthropologists that the hunting and gathering communities live on the edge of scarcity but recent researches have shown that this is not so and that they enjoy a measure of affluence/abundance.

#### 3.2.2 Pastoral

The domestication of animals forms the main feature of the pastoral stage. Some of the pastoral communities mix pastoral economy with agriculture. For acquiring sufficient water and pasture ground for their animals, the pastoral communities have to move from place-to-place. Some pastoralists make only seasonal movements, while others remain constantly on the move. Because of the importance of movement among these people, the size of their population is always relatively small. Raiding of livestock is quite common among pastoralists. They are known to have little regard for authority and centralised administration. In India, the important pastoral communities include the Toda (The buffalo herders of Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu), the Gujar (cattle and buffalo herders) and the Bakerwal (sheep and goat herders) of Jammu and Kashmir.

The pastoral communities have as their staple diet the animal products of meat, milk and blood. The Toda do not mix the blood of the animal with milk as some African pastoralists do.

The livestock reared among pastoralists have deep impact on their religious and other behaviour. Rearing the buffalo, for example, is a sacred activity for the Toda.

# 3.2.3 Shifting Cultivation

In shifting cultivation, after every few years, new ground is cleared by the farmer for planting crops and the old plot is left to its natural growth. Compared to the pastoralists' way of life, practitioners of shifting cultivation have relatively long residence in one area. In such societies, land is often owned by the community.

A number of tribes practise shifting cultivation such as the Bantu of equatorial Africa, Garo of Meghalaya, Baiga and Abujhmar Maria of Madhya Pradesh and Saora of Orissa. A number of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh also practise shifting cultivation.

### 3.2.4 Settled Cultivation

Relatively larger number of simple societies practise settled cultivation, where the same fields are cultivated year after year. Settled cultivation makes it necessary for the villages to become permanent settlements. A number of gods and deities rise up all around the villages, investing religious significance to the villages. The institution of private property also gets more crystallised.

Depending upon the technology, the settled cultivation admits of a two-fold division: hoe cultivation and plough cultivation. Many island communities, like the Trobriand Islanders in the Pacific, are hoe cultivators. The Munda, Santhal and Gond in India are plough cultivators. The hill slopes give rise to yet another type of settled cultivation, because to cultivate the hill slopes are cut up into terraces. The Nagas in India are good examples of terrace cultivators.

#### **Check Your Progress 1**

Note:	i) Use the space provided below for your answers.
	ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
1) ;	Describe the main features of hunting and gathering societies in five lines.

# 3.3 SYSTEMS OF EXCHANGE IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

To give and take things from each other is a necessary part of our daily behaviour and therefore, forms an important aspect of interpersonal relations. In this sense, exchange is not simply a theme in economics. Undoubtedly, many exchanges of goods are of economic nature. In some other cases, occasions of gift-giving, being also ceremonial in nature, express well established and thus, institutionalised relationships among the people. Often, the purpose of exchanging goods is to maintain amicable relations between groups to minimise the possibilities of conflict. For instance, during wedding ceremonies in India, gifts are given and taken by both the sides of the bride and bridegroom. In terms of their use-value, such gifts have certain economic value but they also serve as a mark of status and put a kind of seal or stamp on the new relationship. Secondly, such exchanges are not transacted only once. They usually form a series of gift-giving, which builds mutual feelings of goodwill and express happy relations between the two sides. One of the purposes of exchanging goods is to maintain a state of mutual indebtedness.

Face-to-face relationships of mutual help in simple societies are continually reinforced by exchange of gifts. Many scholars, especially social anthropologists, have studied simple societies. They have highlighted some forms of exchanges, which are peculiar to some cases, with no parallels in Indian society. We bring you two classic examples of the other than economic importance of gift-exchanges in simple societies.

## 3.3.1 Two Examples

## i) The Kula Exchange

Malinowski, in his study of economic activities known as the Kula ring of the Western Pacific region, showed that among the Trobriand Islanders, the members of the Kula ring exchange among themselves ritually and socially valued objects. The system of exchange is regulated in a kind of ring with two directional movements. In clockwise direction, the red shell necklaces circulate and in anti-clockwise circulation, the white arm-shells' circulate among the members of the Kula ring. These objects have no commercial value but carry differing prestige value for donors and receipients. The tribals undertake long dangerous sea voyages in search of these objects, which are economically useless. While the Islanders normally haggle and bargain in their day-to-day buying and selling of other goods, the objects given and taken in the Kula are never subjected to any bargaining.

#### ii) The Potlatch Ceremony

Our second example is from the American North-West where, the Kwakiutl (and also, some other tribes of the region) organised large-scale feasts. At such occasions, not only enormous quantities of food were consumed and gifts given to guests, but also many articles (considered valuable by them) were destroyed. The practice of feasts

(known as the institution of potlatch) among these people shows how giving away of goods to the extent of physically destroying them was linked with their claims to a higher social status. The more feasts one group organised, the more prestige it received. Further, the more a group was invited to such potlatches and the more gifts it received, the more prestige the group gained in the eyes of other groups. These feasts were always organised by agnatic groups, i.e., by those standing in the relationship of brothers to each other. One such group invited other such groups and vied with each other in giving more and more food to eat and more and more gifts to take home and more and more valuables to destroy.

#### **Activity 1**

Do you also have examples of gift exchange which are ritualised? Write an essay of one page on a ritual exchange of gifts in your community. You may discuss your essay with other students at your study centre, as well as, your Academic Counsellor.

#### 3.3.2 Markets

Although, most economic exchange of goods in simple societies take place in markets, there are some societies in which multiple transactions in different items take place without a market. The Trobriand Islanders are a good example of this type.

In some simple societies, for instance in West Africa, markets are well-recognised places for exchanges of goods. They are essential to the functioning of the society's economic system. But besides their economic importance, markets also assume social meaning as a meeting-place. The tribes of Yoruba of Nigeria and Arusha of Tanzania are famous for their markets. Often, Market-places are also used as centres of administration and for dissemination of information. In this respect, traditional centres for development of folk forms of performing arts.

# 3.4 SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

In order to present an overview of simple societies, their social organisation can be briefly studied in four parts, namely, kinship, marriage, religion and polity. Kinship roles in these societies subsume religious and political activities and it is, therefore, reasonable to discuss them in one section.

Social anthropological studies have shown that simple societies have extremely elaborate systems of kinship, religion, economy and polity. But in contrast to modern complex societies, simple societies present relatively simpler ways of organising social life.

# 3.4.1 Kinship

Since most simple societies have been studied in relation to tribal social systems, we discuss the four aspects of social life in simple societies in similar terms. A tribal group is generally considered to be a good example of a simple society. A tribe is, often, spread over a small territory with its language, political and religious organisation. It is usually divided into two or more sections. When divided into only two sections, each section is called a moiety. But if a tribe is divided into more than two sections, each section is called a phratry. Moieties and phratries are, generally, exogamous groups, that is, members of these groups must find their spouses outside these groups; they cannot marry within. Only in some societies, the moieties are endogamous, that is members of such moieties must marry within the moiety. The Toda are an example of such a group.

The members of a moiety or phratry, clan and lineage are under social obligation to help each other. They generally act as corporate groups in performing a number of social, economic, political and religious activities. But the wide dispersal of a number of tribal groups today in many parts of the world has weakened the corporate character of these groups.

#### **3.4.1.1** Descent

Common descent or origin in simple societies is generally traced through lineages and clans. Lineages are those groups, which reckon common descent from a known ancestor. Clans are the groups of those people, who treat each other as related through common ancestry, even though, it may not be traceable with certainty. In other words, clans have mythical ancestors. Lineages are relatively smaller groups with known ancestors within clans, which are wider groups with presumed common ancestry.

Descent is usually traced through either mother or father. Descent through the mother is called matrilineal or uterine descent. In a matrilineal system of descent, a man does not belong to his father's lineage and clan. He belongs to the same clan and lineage as his mother and his mother's brother. The Nayars of South India are an example.

In patrilineal descent, relationship with males and females of one's group is traced only through males. Most of the students of the course are likely to belong to this form of descent system.

Some people, however, have systems of double descent, that is, both matrilineal and patrilineal groups are recognised, but for different purposes. For example, among the Yako (Forde, 1950), the inheritance of immovable property is regulated through patrilineal descent and that of movable property through matrilineal descent.

# 3.4.2 Marriage

In all societies, so also in simple societies, social recognition of mating among their members is arranged through the institution of marriage. Monogamy is the most popular type of marriage found in simple societies. Few tribal groups also practice polygyny where a man has more than one wife at a given point of time. More rare is the polyandry type of marriage, in which a woman is simultaneously the wife of more than one man. The Khasa in Uttar Pradesh and the Toda in Tamil Nadu practise polyandry. But there is a difference between the two. Among the Khasa, the eldest brother marries and all other brothers simultaneously become the husbands of their elder brother's wife. This type of polyandry is called adelphic or fraternal polyandry.

Among the Toda, the husbands of the woman need not be brothers. Multiplicity of husbands raises the problem of the paternity of the child. The Toda solve this problem by the performance of the 'bow and arrow' ceremony. When a woman becomes pregnant, the husband who performs the 'bow and arrow' ceremony becomes the father of the child to be born. He becomes the father of all the children born to her after the ceremony. He is regarded as the father of the children born even after his death if no other husband has performed, in the meantime the 'bow and arrow' ceremony. This institution is indicative of the fact that the Toda give emphasis to social rather than biological paternity.

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

Note:	i) Use the space provided below for your answers.
	ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
1)	Write a note in ten lines on social division in tribal societies.
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# 3.4.3 Religion

With their simple technology, the people in simple societies have very little control over the natural environment. They are always overawed by the ferocities of nature. Forest fires, floods thunder, cloud-bursts, earthquakes and wild animals, all affects them severely and therefore they get frightened by the natural calamities far more than in more complex societies.

The belief in impersonal supernatural force finds expression in the wide spread belief in 'mana', a supernatural power generally associated with kings or successful men. Many Indian tribes, such as the Munda and the Ho of Singhbhum, Bihar also believe in this force, which they call 'bonga'. Yet another expression of impersonal supernatural force is 'taboo'. Taboo is a negative force and anyone who does not observe it exposes himself to the danger of supernatural punishment. Taboo is used to regulate social activities. Many tribal communities put a taboo mark on their property in the field and the forest to ensure against theft. 'Mana' and 'taboo' are polynesian terms, which have been incorporated into anthropological/sociological vocabulary.

Lack of understanding of the environment causes in them great anxiety. So it is no wonder that the simple societies develop their own theories regarding the nature and functioning of their environment. They have developed a theory of causation, which tells them that natural events are caused by supernatural forces. The supernatural forces have been visualised as belonging to two categories: personal forces and impersonal forces. Religion addresses itself to the personal forces and magic relates to the impersonal forces. Religion and magic, for the tribal, are thus not contradictory but complementary to each other.

# 3.4.3.1 Religion and Magic

Religion assumes that certain spirits and deities preside over nature. They have to be propitiated, placated and worshipped in order to get their blessings. These spirits may send both blessings and curses. So an element of freedom and an exercise of will are attributed to the spirits and deities. Magic on the other hand, is an impersonal force which can be made to operate provided the magic is performed properly. There is no exercise of will with regard to the impersonal force. Magic must succeed. It can fail only by an improper performance of magic or by the performance of more powerful counter-magic.

Frazer (1920) believed all magic to be sympathetic, based on the principle of sympathy between cause and effect. He identified two laws governing the operation of magic, the law of similarity and the law of contact. The magic based on the first law he called homoeopathic or imitative magic and the magic based on the second law he called contagious magic. In homoeopathic magic an image of the enemy is destroyed in order to destroy the enemy. In contagious magic, magic is played on the separated part of the body of the enemy, such as paired nails and hair.

But magic is not always destructive. It is in fact only a symbolic act. Magic is the playing out of an event. It expresses desires in symbolic ways.

In brief, religion provides the simple societies with a theory of causation. It builds confidence of nature. The fertility of fields, herds, women, of land and water are believed to be ensured by religion. Religion also has certain political aspects, which we shall examine, in the following section. You have already noticed the role of taboo in the maintenance of order in certain spheres of tribal life.

#### **Activity 2**

Do you think your religion and religious rituals have some elements of magic in it? If yes, write a note of about one page on the topic of "Role of Magic in My Religion" and compare it with those of other students at your study centre.

## **3.4.4** Polity

Maintenance of order over time is the central concern of political organisation in all societies. But different societies solve this problem of order in different ways. Modern state societies, characterised by structural differentiation, use the differentiated state apparatus for the maintenance of order.

The simple societies are characterised by undifferentiated ways of keeping law and order. The responsibility of maintenance of order is distributed among a number of institutions and structures. Manifestly non-political institutions like kinship and religion also perform political functions.

# 3.4.4.1 Types of Political System—Cephalous

Political systems among the simple societies are divided into two groups: (i) cephalous and (ii) acephalous. Cephalous political system is one in which there is a recognised head, a chief or a king. Acephalous political system is one in which no single head is recognised and order is maintained by means other than state apparatus. Both cephalous and acephalous political systems admit of a number of subtypes within them.

Among the cephalous political systems at least four subtypes can be recognised. Shilluk, Swazi, Ethiopean Kingdom and Muslim Emirates of northern Nigeria may be taken to represent these four types. Among the Shilluk, the headship is more ritual and symbolic than substantial. The order is maintained by the principle of lineage rather than by state apparatus. Swazi and Ethiopean Kingdoms represent two variants of a common system. In both systems, kingship is a powerful institution. Kingship enjoys divine sanction in both these systems. To disobey the king is not only a breach of political obligation, it is also at the same time a breach of the religious obligation. In both, authority is devoluted from the king to his subordinates from the king to his subordinates. Among the Swazi, the devolution of authority is made from the king to his close kinsmen. Thus in this type, the king and his close kinsmen rule.

In the Ethiopean Kingdom also there is devolution of authority from the King to his subordinates. But the subordinates are not his kinsmen, they are his loyal non-kin dependants. In fact in this system the kinsmen are avoided and very often intense rivalry exists between the king and his kinsmen. Close kinsmen are often imprisoned so that they do not create any trouble for the ruling chief. Thus, kinship is not without significance even in this third type of cephalous political system. Though it must be noted that in this type the significance is negative and instead of basking in the sunshine of their kin, they are consigned to the darkness of the prisons.

The fourth subtype within the cephalous is qualitatively different from the above three subtypes. In all the three, the ruler and the ruled are tribals of one ethnic group or another. They share a number of social and political attitudes despite differentiation on class and power hierarchy. In this fourth subtype the ruler comes from a different culture and dominates over the tribal culture. It is clearly a case of political conquest. Our example representing this type is the Muslim Emirate of northern Nigeria.

# 3.4.4.2 Acephalous

Among the acephalous political systems, once again, four subtypes can be identified. The (i) Central African Bushmen, (ii) Yako of Nigeria, (iii) Masai of east Africa, and (iv) Nuer of Sudan may be taken to represent these four subtypes. Bushmen are

hunting and gathering people, constantly moving from one place to another in search of roots, fruits and tubers or in search of game animal. They are fragmented into small bands. Whatever disputes that arise within and between families are resolved by the elders of the band.

The second subtype consists of autonomous villages with their councils. Among the Yako the village councils contribute to the maintenance of order. Membership of the village council is based on a number of criteria such as genealogical position, economic success and qualities of leadership.

The third subtype of which Masai herders are an example is quite widespread in east Africa. The transition from childhood to manhood is not an unnoticed and uneventful phenomenon among the simple societies. Most of them give ritual recognition to this phenomenon. Among the Masai, the children undergoing this transition are initiated into the youngest age-set. In course of time the youngest age-set becomes the eldest age-set and then it has to take on the responsibility of maintaining law and order. So in this third subtype the maintenance of order is the responsibility of the age-sets.

The fourth subtype is also quite widespread and Nuer tribe of Sudan is an example of this subtype. Order is maintained in such societies by balanced opposition. The Nuer are divided into agnatic descent groups, the lineages. Members of a lineage are obliged to help other on occasions of dispute. Hence a dispute between two individuals belonging to two different lineages soon becomes a dispute between two lineages. Each lineage organises itself into a fighting group to support its member. But when the two persons in dispute belong to the same lineage, then the conflict is confined to this particular lineage and nobody outside this group is involved in this dispute

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

Note:	<ul><li>i) Use the space provided below for your answers.</li><li>ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.</li></ul>
1)	What is an acephalous political system? Write in about twelve lines.

# 3.5 COLONIAL IMPACT ON SIMPLE SOCIETES

European colonialism came to be imposed on many simple societies from the 18th century. Nineteenth century and the following decades represent the worst period of

colonial exploitation. Though a large number of simple societies in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania have been able to cast off colonial rule, there are quite a few still struggling to throw off the yoke. Even in those societies which have become politically independent, a number of structures and networks of exploitation established during colonial rule continue to sap, manifestly or latently, the economic, political and psychological vitality of these ex-colonial communities.

Colonialism imposed its imprint on all aspects of tribal life since the 18th century. Economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the simple societies came to be directly and indirectly, influenced by colonial rule. It has however to be noted that all tribal societies under colonial rule did not experience the same level of disorganisation in their social systems. In some the disrupting influence was much more severe than in others. We shall now examine the impact of colonialism in the economic, political, social and cultural aspects of simple societies

With the establishment of colonial rule the economics of the simple societies came to be integrated with the international capitalist economic system. Some got intimately integrated while others were only remotely integrated. In other words, some societies adapted themselves much faster to new ideas practices and technological changes then others. Economic integration with the capitalist system took three main forms: one, by supplying the traditional products to the international commercial network through a series of local and provincial agencies; two, through the introduction of new crops at the inducement and coercion of the colonial capitalists; and three, by joining willingly or under pressure, the industrial wage labour. The impact of economic integration was most in the third and least in the first.

## 3.5.1 Supply of Traditional Products

In the first category come the hunting and gathering, pastoral and agricultural communities that sold their traditional products to the agents of the capitalist market. This initiated anew system of exchange and influenced to a certain extent, their traditional systems of exchange and exchange obligations. But the impact was limited to only certain areas of their social life. Cash got introduced to their system and they could purchase with it certain new items of consumption but this did not bring about a restructuring of economic relations in these simple societies.

# 3.5.2 Introduction of New Crops

The changes introduced by the second type of integration were more far reaching than those associated with the first. In this a new agricultural cycle had to be followed bringing about considerable change in the domestic organisation of production. Most important consequence was the impact of fluctuations of the international price with regard to the cash crops grown by these communities. Tobacco and sugarcane, were some of the crops grown by the tribal communities specially for the world market. In many cases they had to replace food crops by cash crops and hence were forced to buy food from the market. Tribes in West Africa, for instance the Yorubas, were drawn into the international capitalist market through this second type of integration. But this type of integration did not result in geographical dislocation.

# 3.5.3 The Industrial Wage Labour

The most disastrous consequences followed from the third type of integration, by entering the industrial labour market. The colonialists developed industries for which they needed cheap labour. A number of inducements were first tried in Africa to lure people into industrial employment. But when they failed, a lot of repressive measures were taken to force the tribal people to work in the mines in the copper belt and in other factories started all over urban Africa. People were forced to pay taxes in cash which was available only in urban-industrial labour and when even these measures failed, physical capture of tribals was resorted to man the mines and the factories.

These repressive measures did not stop at the factory gates but the entire industrial discipline and the conditions of work were very repressive. Plantations in India, Africa and Latin America, employed tribal and non-tribal labour also called indentured labour and subjected them to dehumanising industrial discipline. This kind of integration involved geographical migration, very often leaving the wife, children and old-parents at home in the village. The worker faced problems at both ends of migration, at the village end as well as at the factory.

Imposition of colonial rule disrupted the political order of the tribal communities. The traditional political systems lost their sovereignty and legitimacy. The traditional political chiefs suddenly found that their rights, authority and power had vanished. They acted now as the representatives of the colonial power and had to behave with their own tribesmen in ways they would not have ever thought of doing in the past. Traditional jurisprudence, traditional measures of the resolution of conflict, all became irrelevant in the new colonial situation.

New political institutions, like police, magistrates and jails, came up all over the tribal world. New jurisprudence was imposed on them whose logic they failed to appreciate. New men came to occupy many of these new positions. Though following the principle of indirect rule, the British in 'Africa tried to retain old chiefs in many areas but this could not be done everywhere. Hence new chiefs were appointed in many communities.

#### 3.5.4 Problems of Colonialism

The new political system had many problems. It was divorced from its relationship with kinship and religion. In the traditional political order as we have examined in an earlier section, kinship and religion played an important part. The chief was assumed to possess supernatural power because it was retained within one family. With chiefs coming from other families, the religious character of kingship got considerably eroded. Irrelevance of kinship support disintegrated not only the political system, but also, to a great extent, even the kinship system. This is because of the fact that this political role of the kinship system went a long way in giving a sense of unity and solidarity.

Economic and political changes had serious implications for the institutions and processes of social solidarity. In fact the tribals found it hard to accept the cognitive and affective elements of the new industrial culture. They got industrialised but could not internalise the values of industrialism. The lack of industrialism resulted in the high rate of absenteeism and low rate of turn over. The tribals became migrants not only from the village to the urban-industrial complex but also from factory to factory, from industry to industry. Thus an element of uncertainty and insecurity developed.

Colonial imposition resulted also in the disintegration of tribal cultures. Introduction of new market rationality and cash economy moved them over from generalised reciprocity to balanced reciprocity and in many cases to even negative reciprocity.

In the new urban-industrial environment they were not in a position to perform their multiple rites and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death. This created psychological deprivation and psychological strains within them. Living in an urban-industrial environment kept them away from the annual ritual cycle, from the festivals and also from a host of ritual obligations they were supposed to meet at their village home. They suffered from a cultural vacuum at the urban industrial centre. They could not practise their own culture and they could not participate in the cultural activities of the urban-industrial centres. They became alienated not only from their village but also from the industrial culture. In fact they got alienated from themselves.

The triblas did not meekly accept the imposition of colonial rule. Researches and studies bear testimony to the fighting spirit of the tribals. In Kenya the Giriamas rose against colonialism in 1913-14. The cult of Mumbo gripped the Gusii and the Luo in Kenya. The Mau Mau rebellion, again in Kenya, speaks of the tribals' determination to throw away the colonial masters. The cargo cults in Oceania are another expression

of the tribal antagonism to colonialism. In India too the tribals rose in violent uprisings against the British and their supporters throughout the nineteenth century. The tribes of Chotanagpur, the Munda, Ho and the Santhal, all rose against the British and the Zamindars in the nineteenth century. In fact the uprisings were so many in the nineteenth century Chotanagpur, that it may easily be called the century of tribal rebellions.

Two features stand out very clearly with regard to these tribal uprisings. One, most of them were violent, to the extent permitted by their primitive tools. Two, they looked for religious support for their success., They were all movements of hope of one kind or another and were all too sure about their success. Needless to say most of them were brutally crushed by the mighty colonial powers.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

Note:	i) Use the space provided below for your answers.
	ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
1)	Write a note in about fifteen lines on exploitation of labour under colonialism
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## 3.6 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit that simple societies have many different aspects to them. There are tribal economies, which have special features including hunting, gathering and agriculture.

This unit covered the factor of exchange in simple societies and their social organisation. Marriage religion and political organisation were also discussed. Types of political system in simple societies were examined. We have also pointed out how simple societies suffered under colonialism, including exploitation of labour. We have thus given a well-rounded overview of simple societies. A video programme, sent to your study centre and dealing with an example of a simple society, gives you a visual understanding of simple societies.

# 3.7 FURTHER READINGS

- 1) Bose, N.K., 1971. Tribal Life in India. National Book Trust: Delhi.
- 2) Radcliffe Brown, A.R., 1964. Structure and Function in Primitive Society. Cohen and West: London.

3) Walker, A.R., 1986. The Toda of South India: A New Look. Hindustan Publishing Corporation: Delhi.

# 3.8 KEY WORDS

Acephalous: Society with no recognised head, or single political authority.

Cephalous: Society with a single political head, e.g. a king.

Exogamous: Where marriage must be outside a given group.

Matrilineal: Where descent is traced through female ancestors.

**Moiety** : When a tribe is divided into two sections.

Patrilineal: When descent is traced from male ancestors.

Phratry: When a tribe is divided into many sections, each section is called a

phratry.

Poligyny: When a man has more than one wife.

# 3.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

## **Check Your Progress 1**

In hunting and gathering societies, people live by hunting large and small animals. They supplement this source of food by collecting a wide range of roots, fruits, and tubers. Living close to nature, the people adapt themselves to nature and move from place-to-place in search of food. In some cases, the hunters and gatherers managed to enjoy a measure of affluence by securing surplus food.

#### **Check Your Progress 2**

I) Generally, a tribe is divided into two or more sections. In a tribe with two sections, each section is called a moiety. Tribes with more than two sections refer each of these divisions by the term 'phratry'. Moieties and phratries are, generally, exogamous, that is, spouses are found from outside the social divisions. In some societies, e.g., the Toda, moieties are endogamous, that is, members of the moieties must marry within the division.

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

In acephalous political systems, no single head is recognised and order is maintained by means other than the state apparatus. This system has four sub-types, exemplified by four groups—the Central African Bushmen, the Yako of Nigeria, the Masai of East Africa and the Nuer of Sudan. In the first sub-type, order is maintained by the eldest of each band of Bushmen, hunters and gatherers. In the second sub-type, the village councils and in the third sub-type, age-sets take the responsibility of keeping order in society. In the fourth sub-type, order is kept on the basis of relations among lineages.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

1) Labour was required for industries, developed by colonial powers in various parts of the world. The colonialists, being a part of the capitalist economic system, wanted to acquire labour at minimum cost. As they held also political power over the colonies, they were able to coerce the colonised people in providing cheap labour to their industries. People from simple societies were lured into factories on false promises. When these protests lost their efficacy, even repressive measures were employed for keeping the tribals in labour force. Plantations in Asia, Africa and the Americas subjected their labourers to dehumanising conditions of work