

Characteristics of society

Society is viewed as a process as well as a structure which are complementary to each other. It exists only where social beings behave toward one another in ways determined by their recognition of one another. It is conceived as a structure, that is, a recognisable network of inter-relating institutions. The notion that societies are structured depends upon their reproduction over time. Society is not a static and peacefully evolving structure, but the tentative solution to the conflicts arising out of antagonistic social relation of production. Social scientists see society as being made possible by the shared understanding of its members. The implication here is that society has been constituted and reconstituted in social interaction. Each interaction episode contains within it the possibility of innovation and change. Society is characterized by likeness, abstract nature, permanency, difference, inter dependence, co operation, conflict, competition, accommodation and assimilation, sociability etc.

i. Likeness: Likeness is an essential prerequisite of society. The sense of likeness in early society was focussed on kinship while in modern societies it is focussed on the principle of nationality.

ii. Abstract: Society embodies the social relationship among the individuals. It means that it is not something which can be seen,

observed, touched or scented but an abstract feeling which cement the fellow human beings with one another. It is an abstract organisation which prevails wherever there is existence of social relationships.

iii. Permanent organisation: Society is entirely different from the temporary gatherings of people or crowd. It is a coherent permanent organisation. It is not born with any temporary objective to achieve but it exists and will continue to exist as long as human beings inhabit this planet.

iv. Difference: A society based exclusively on likeness and uniformity is bound to be loose in social ties. There are natural differences of aptitude, interest and capacity. These differences are necessary for society as likeness will result in little reciprocity and little give and take.

v. Inter-dependence: Inter-dependence is indispensable among human beings and this leads to establishment of relationships which is essential to constitute society.

vi. Co-operation: No society can exist without co-operation. It inculcates the feeling of mutual help among the members.

vii. Conflict: Conflict is a major component of society. It expresses itself in numerous ways and in various degrees. Conflicts create a sense of insecurity and this leads to search of strategies to manage them so that the members live in harmony

viii. Competition: Competition among members cannot be controlled as every member has an urge to attain any object or objects which are limited in supply.

ix. Accommodation and assimilation: Accommodation and assimilation facilitate the functioning of the society.

x. Sociability: Man cannot live without society.