NCERT Solutions Class 11 Sociology

Chapter - Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society

Q1 : Would you agree with the statement that rapid social change is a comparatively new phenomenon in human history? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer : Yes, rapid social change is a comparatively new phenomenon in human history. It has been estimated that the human beings have been in existence for 500,000 years, but civilization started only around 6,000 years ago. The most rapid changes started 400 years ago and the pace of changes increased in the last100 years. This acceleration in changes was mainly due to advancements in technology and the advent of industrial revolution. Therefore, the speed of these changes that are occurring, is increasing day by day, every decade. The human beings are progressing towards development and new scientific milestones everyday.

Q2 : How is social change to be distinguished from other kinds of change?

Answer : Social change, unlike other forms of change, refers to significant changes that take place in the foundations of social structure and systems of a society. Other forms of change may impact certain aspects of social life without encompassing it as a whole. Such restrictions are not applied to social changes.

It does not include the small changes but only the big changes that alter the society fundamentally. The influence of such changes has to be both intensive and extensive.

Therefore, the changes that impact a large section of the society are called social changes. For example, a change in the government may not necessarily qualify as a social change. However a change in the social ideals from capitalism to socialism or abolition of practices like untouchability, that impact a large number of people, does represent social change.

Q3 : What do you understand by `structural change'? Explain with examples other than those in the text.

Answer : Structural change refers to the transformation in the structure of a society. This type of change includes changes in the structure of social institutions or the rules by which they are run. Structural changes are thus long term and permanent changes. For example, globalization is a structural change. It took place in order to integrate the economies of the world through a global network.

Q4 : Describe some kinds of environment-related social change.

Answer : The nature of a society is altered by its ecology and environment. Modern technology has significantly altered the impact of environment on society. However, catastrophic events that take place can change the structure of a society completely. For instance, the tsunami that occurred in the Indian Ocean changed the lives of people drastically. These changes are irreversible and permanent in nature. There was a great loss of lives, loss of livelihood and in many cases, large scale migration of people to new areas in search of new opportunities. Thus, the tsunami became an agent of social change. Similar phenomena are associated with floods, draughts and earthquakes.

Q5 : What are some kinds of changes brought about by technology and the economy?

Answer : Technology and economy have immensely changed the structure of the society. Technology, through its association with the economy, has caused major social changes. Various examples of these changes are as follows:

(i) The Industrial Revolution, which brought about many industries and the development of capitalist system of production in society.

(ii) The invention of steam engine and development of various modes of transport like rail and aeroplane transformed the entire economy and social geography of the world.

(iii) Steam ships made gigantic changes not only in the economy, but also in the social, cultural and demographic directions, by enabling large scale trade.

(iv) Development of textile industry in Britain had a negative impact upon the handloom industry in India which was very distant from Britain. This type of integration of economies was enabled only by the advent of technology.

(v) Changes in economic institutions caused a skewed demand for labour and adoption of new social practices. For example, development of plantation agriculture of cash crops established slavery and slave trade between Europe, America and Africa.

(vi) The ongoing process of globalisation, while being beneficial for multinational corporations, has had a negative impact on indigenous industries.

Q6 : What is meant by social order and how is it maintained?

Answer : Social order is the tendency of social institutions to resist and regulate change. It is useful as it provides a backdrop and relativity to compare social change. Every society strives for social order in order to maintain stability and provide a strong and viable social system. This inevitably leads to the process of stratification of society as social rules need a visible authority for them to be followed. Thus, social order is maintained by the people who are in power because they do not want to lose control over the societal norms and access to resources. Therefore, the dominant groups in societies resist social change because it may reduce their status. As power generally lies with such groups, they are successful in their endeavour and societies acquire stability.

Q7 : What is authority and how is it related to domination and the law?

Answer : Authority, according to Max Weber, is the power which is legitimate, justified and proper. It is generally derived from the official position of a person and the powers are specified on written documents. Other members of a society implicitly agree to follow the authority. For example, the authority of police or a judge.

A law is an explicitly codified norm or rule and usually exists in a written form. Authority is related to law and domination as the difference between the strict authority, which is explicitly codified, and the informal authority, lies in the notion of law.

In a modern democratic state, the laws are created by legislature. They act as a binding force on citizens and, hence, dominate them. This domination works through legitimate power or authority, a large part of which is codified in the law. It requires consent and cooperation on a regular basis to maintain legitimacy.

Q8 : How are a village, town and city distinguished from each other?

Answer : In sociological terms, a village and a city are distinguished by their social organisation, administrative factors like population density and the proportion of agriculture and its allied economic activities.

Villages emerged as part of the major changes in social structure which was brought by the transition from nomadic life to a more settled form of life. They are traditionally dependent upon agriculture and other primary activities for income. They also have lower density of population. In comparison, towns and cities have higher population density and are more dependent upon industries for income.

The difference between a city and a town is based upon their size. A city is similar to a town, except that it is much larger in size and area.

Q9 : What are some features of social order in rural areas?

Answer : Every rural area has a different condition. Thus, the social order also varies from village to village. The features of social order in rural areas are as follows:

(i) The small size of a village is suitable for more personalised relationships.

(ii) The social structure of a village follows traditional lifestyle. Institutions such as caste and religion are stronger here.

(iii) The social institutions do not welcome change easily, as compared to towns and cities.

(iv) A village also has a strong power structure as the people in power control all the resources and resist change.

(v) It is not easy for subordinate groups to challenge the dominant groups. The poor are dependent upon dominant sections for support and employment.

(vi) The villages are not very well connected to the towns and cities and thus not conducive to change.

(vii) New modes of communication, land reforms and technology have reduced this gap and accelerated the pace of change.

Q10 : What are some of the challenges to social order in urban areas?

Answer : Most of the challenges to social order in the urban areas are related to the 'space'. This is because of the high population density which leads to the problem of logistics. The following are some of these challenges:

(i) The management of space is related to development of housing, transportation, land use and public facilities like sanitation, policing and urban governance.

(ii) Inadequate facilities for housing results in homelessness and development of slums that are congested and overcrowded neighbourhoods, with improper facilities.

(iii) Law and order issues due to criminal activities in slums. The major cause is the undefined rights over property of slum owners.

(iv) The residential colonies in urban areas are mixed with people of all class, caste, religion and ethnicity, which also give rise to communal problems, such as riots, and the phenomenon of ghettoization.

(v) The gated or affluent communities are separated from their surroundings by walls, gates and run their own parallel facilities for water and electricity supply, policing and security.

(vi) Large distances between residential, industrial and commercial areas place a burden on transport. People rely on private transport, which results in congestion and pollution.