

## Social Group: Characteristics

- Group is an aggregate of individuals which persists in time, which has one or more interests and activities in common and which is organised.
- According to MacIver and Page, "By group we mean any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationships with one another."
- According to Agarwala and Almquist, "Whenever two or more individuals come together and influence one-another, they may be said to constitute a social group."
- Characteristics 1. Reciprocal Relation 2. Sense of unity 3. we-feeling 4. Common-interest 5. common ideals and values 6. contact and communication between <sup>among</sup> members. 7. control over members

Sociologists have classified social groups on the basis of size, permanence, degree of intimacy, type of organisation and quality of social interaction etc.

- C.H. Cooley (<sup>American Sociologist</sup> Charles Horton Cooley) has classified group into two categories on the basis of contact.
- C.H. Cooley in his book (Social organisation) has introduced the term primary groups.
- Primary groups are characterised by face to face contact and cooperation. Close, informal, mutual, intimate, and personal relationships exist among the members of this group.
- Cooley has said that they are primarily in several sense but chiefly in that they are fundamental in framing the social nature and ideals of the individuals.
- The group is characterised by a sense of we, an emotional attachment committed to the whole rather than to other individuals or to the specific goals of given members.
- They in primary group everyone is interested in the welfare of everyone else.
- Cooley designated family, Neighbourhood, playground, Peer Group etc. as the primary group.

Some of the essential attributes of primary group are as follows

① Physical Proximity ② Small size of the group ③ Duration of the relationship ④ Stability ⑤ Similarity of background ⑥ Limited self-interest ⑦ Identity of ends ⑧ Relationship is personal ⑨ The relation is all inclusive and is spontaneous. (importance of primary group)

It enhances the process of humanization ② It works as a psychological safety values ③ It contributes in the maintenance of social norms & values ④ It correlates the relationships between individuals & society ⑤ It enhances cultural communication.

## Secondary Group

- Society has contrasted primary group with the secondary group which Kingsley Davis described as more impersonal, more specialized, more temporary, usually larger and requiring less emotional commitment from the individual.
  - The secondary groups are just the opposite of primary groups.
  - According to Ogburn "The group which provides experience lacking in intimacy is called Secondary Groups".
  - Unlike primary group, group structure is formal.
  - The secondary group might be a labour union, the great corporation, the factory, the Army, University, a political party or it might be two persons bargaining briefly over a store counter.
  - In any case, the group exists to serve limited purpose involving only a segment of the personalities of the members.
- Characteristic features 1. Formal and impersonal relations 2. Large in size 3. Options of membership 4. Formal rules 5. Status of individual depends on his roles 6. Goal oriented 7. Deliberately formed 8. Lack of physical proximity 9. Limited responsibility of members.

While primary groups are relation-oriented, secondary groups are goal-oriented.

### Primary group

1. Small size, limited membership
2. Continuity of relationships
3. Physical proximity
4. Spontaneous growth
5. It is all inclusive
6. It is primary and informal means of control
7. It promotes group-living
8. Informal and intimate relationships
9. we feeling found
10. Membership compulsory

### Secondary Group

1. It is relatively large, unlimited membership
2. No continuity of relationships
3. No physical proximity
4. Deliberately formed
5. Exclusively formal
6. Secondary and formal means of control
7. It promotes individualism
8. Relationship not intimate but formal in nature
9. Lack of we-feeling to membership is voluntary

## Reference Group.

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- The concept of 'Reference Group' was firstly used by Herbert Hyman in 1942 in his essay 'Psychology of Status'.
- reference group is any group that individuals use as a standard for evaluating themselves and their own behavior.
- It is the group to which the individual relates or aspires to relate himself or herself psychologically.
- It becomes the individual's frame of reference and source for ordering his or her experiences, perceptions, cognition and idea of self.
- It becomes the basis of reference in making comparisons or contrasts and in evaluating one's appearance and performance.
- Robert K. Merton has also made contribution in developing the concept of reference group.
- According to Merton "Reference groups are those groups which are referring points of the individual, towards which he is oriented and which influences his opinion, tendency and behavior".
- A reference group may or may not be a membership group. It can also be both positive and negative.

## Characteristics:

1. The individual or group considers the behaviour of other individuals or groups as ideal behaviour & imitates it.
2. The feeling of relative weakness or defects lead to feeling of relative deprivation in the individual or group.
3. In reference group, behaviour of the individual or group derives rise higher in the social scale and as such the group or individual comes to feel its own defects or weaknesses.
4. Individual and group compare himself or itself with the other individuals or group.

## Status and Role.

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- The term 'Status' is generally used to designate the comparative amount of prestige, difference or respect accorded to persons who have been assigned different roles in a group or community.
- In other words, this is the position occupied by a person, family or kinship group in social system relative to the others. The status of a person is high if the role he is playing is considered important by the group.
- If the role is regarded less high, its performer may be accorded a lower status. Thus the status of a person is based on social evaluation.
- According to Ralph Linton, we occupy a status but we play a role.

— Social status has a hierarchical distribution in which a few persons occupy the highest position.

— The simplest theoretical model of the status system would be a distribution in which the position was determined comparatively by the possession of abilities relative to the demand for abilities in the society.

— Social status is determined by education, income, possession and the social valuation of occupation and of other activities in the society.

— Every status carries with it some prestige.

Types of Status: According to Ralph Linton Status is of two types

1 Ascribed Status: is one over which the individual has absolutely no control, no choice and is fixed by birth.

— Thus the ascribed status may be defined with reference to the status based on age, sex, birth, Race, Caste, Kinship etc.

② Achieved Status: A social position which is secured through an individual choice and competition is known as achieved status.

— Thus the status achieved by an individual with his own effort or struggle e.g. marital status, occupational status, educational status etc.

— The important aspect of social status is that it must be recognised by society.

When values change in a society the criteria or criterion for receiving status also changes. The importance of caste was more in traditional society than in modern one.

### Role

- A role is the expected behaviour associated with the specific social status.
- Ralph Linton has referred to role as dynamic aspect of the status.
- He believes that status is a sum of rights and duties. When an individual exercises these rights and duties he is performing his role.
- Each individual in a society has many status positions and therefore he performs a variety of roles.
- Characteristics of Role
  - ① Role is the action aspect of status. Role involves various type of action that a person has to perform in accordance with the expectation of the society.
  - ② Role is of changing nature. The social role is always in accordance with value, ideals, pattern etc. When there change, the concept of role also changes.
  - ③ Role has a very limited field of operation. The role has to be confined within that. For e.g., an officer has the role to play in the office but when he reaches his role the role ceases.
  - ④ Hundred percent performance of role is impossible. It is not possible for anyone to perform his role fully in accordance with the expectation of the society. There is bound to be some distinction. For example one may not be able to perform his role to the full satisfaction of the children. He is not a machine.
- Whenever two or more roles are associated with a particular social status, it is said to constitute a role-set. E.g., a local doctor will have role relation with the patient and

— the doctor of local hospital with his fellow doctor and a number of professional associations and so on.

Role-conflict: occurs where there are incompatible demands placed upon a person relating to their job or position.

— Persons experience role conflict when they find themselves pulled in various directions as they try to respond to many statuses they hold.

— In other words it is the conflict experienced by the individual at the time of role playing at two levels.

(a) within his own body of roles

(b) between his own role and those of other actors

— An individual may experience conflict if there is a discrepancy between his perception of his role and his perception of his actual role behavior. e.g. if a person finds a vast difference between how he should act as a husband and how he actually does behave. he may experience an inner conflict.

— Secondly, An individual may perceive some incompatibility between the role requirements of two or more roles he is playing them together.

e.g. one role as a doctor may come into clash with one's role as a husband or wife at home as he has to see the patients even during the non-working hours if the need arises.

### Norms

— Norms are rules that specify appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

— Norms are expectations of conception of ideal behaviour that are shared by the members of a society at large or by members of particular groups within a society.

— It refers to the social expectation about correct and proper behaviour.

— Norms imply the presence of legitimacy, consent and prescription while deviation from the norm is punished by sanction.

— Norms are acquired by internalization and socialisation.

## Characteristics of Norm:

- ① Norms are standards of group behaviour. It is a set of standards that regulate their relationship and modes of behaviour.
- ② Norms incorporate value judgement. Norms are based on social values which are justified by moral standards or aesthetic judgement.
- ③ Norms are learned - by an individual in social intercourse with others that is, in the process of socialisation.
- ④ Norms are diverse. Some are widely known accepted and followed whereas others are characterized by low consensus and only partial conformity. Some norms are learned, some are acquired.
- ⑤ Norms may serve in relating to any aspect of human activity. There are norms for perceiving, feeling, thinking, judging, evaluating and acting.
- ⑥ Norms give cohesion to the society.

## Value:

- A value is defined as that which we consider desirable, that which we prefer, that which we consider important enough to guide much of our action. (values are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad at and desirable or undesirable)
- A value is commitment to something. It is something we consider worthy. In most situations, our choice of action depends partly on our values.
- To the sociologist, values are constant facts of social structure.
- Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude.
- Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations.
- Characteristics:
  - ① Social values are collective
  - ② Social values are social standards
  - ③ There is an agreement about social values in the group
  - ④ Social values are dynamic
  - ⑤ Social values are different
  - ⑥ Social values are considered important for social welfare & social needs.

## Folkways and Mores

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- There are some behaviours which are desired in society, however they are not considered crucial for the survival of society. These are called Folkways.
- According to Horton and Hunt, "Folkways are simply the customary, normal, habitual ways of doing things".
- The term 'Folkways' was introduced in Sociology by "Graham Sumner (American Sociologist) in his book entitled 'Folkways' in 1906.
- According to him Folkway is the learned behaviour shared by a social group that provides a traditional mode of conduct.
- Folkways are social conventions that are not considered to be of moral significance by members of the group.
- The Folkways of groups, like the habits of individuals, originate in the frequent repetition of acts that prove successful for satisfying basic human needs. These acts become uniform and are widely accepted.
- Folkways operate primarily at an unconscious level and persist because they are expedient ( ).
- Sumner believed that Folkways from diverse areas of life tended to become consistent with each other creating definite patterns.
- Tradition, habit and religious sanctions tend to strengthen Folkways as time passes, making them more and more arbitrary, positive and compelling.

Characteristics:

- ① It is socially accepted and approved pattern of behaviour
- ② It has spontaneous origin
- ③ Important for human society on the basis of which it adapts to social values of environment
- ④ According to Robert Redd, the number of folkways grows as society develops
- ⑤ Folkways control the human behaviour and brings uniformity to it
- ⑥ Folkways are inherited from generation to generation
- ⑦ Folkways are oriented towards group welfare
- ⑧ Folkways are unwritten and not very clear like law
- ⑨ Some folkways are considered very important while others are not
- ⑩ The folkways of one society are different from that of other society
- ⑪ It changes according to time and space

## Mores

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The word 'Mores' has been originated from the Latin word 'mores' which means custom.

- Sumner applied the term to those folkways which are considered by the group to be of great significance and therefore, rather indispensable to its welfare.
- Mores relate to the fundamental needs of the society more directly than do the folkways.
- Mores are in fact the folkways considered as regulators of behaviour conformity. They express the group sense of what is fitting, right and conducive to social welfare.
- They are the only right ways of thinking and acting.
- According to Sumner mores are more coercive than folkways.
- relatively mild disapproval follows an infringement of a folkway.
- severe disapproval or punishment follows the breaking of mores.
- Sumner saw folkways and mores as essentially conservative and doubted the ability of members of a society to change them consciously.
- The small variations introduced by individuals in their observance, however, allows for some change.

Characteristics : ① It has spontaneous development ② It is traditional and conservative in nature ③ It is natural to the society ④ It consists of a sense of morality ⑤ It is the informal social norm ⑥ It consists of sentiments of group welfare ⑦ Important means of social control ⑧ It judges the validity and legitimacy of a behaviour ⑨ Mores are not universal rather it is particularistic. ⑩ It ensures social solidarity.

Culture:

- Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, morals, customs, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society.
  - Through culture people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society.
  - True culture includes many societal aspects in language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products and institutions.
- Important definitions: According to Edward Taylor, <sup>(Anthropologist)</sup> <sup>(Ethnologist)</sup> "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".
- According to Robert Bierce (American sociologist) <sup>6</sup> "culture is the complex whole that consists of everything we think and do and have as a member of society".

- Characteristics:
1. culture is acquired or inherited quality
  2. culture is social not an individual heritage of man
  3. culture fulfills some needs
  4. language is the chief vehicle of culture
  5. culture is an integrated system
  6. culture evolves into more complex forms.
  7. culture is a body of truths
  8. it is a set of values
  9. set of norms
  10. it is a set of goals.

Types of culture

1. High culture: The term high culture is usually used to refer to cultural creations that have a particularly high status. In other words high culture is generally pursued by the upper class. for e.g. classical music, fine arts, the paintings of artists, critically acclaimed literature such as works of Shakespeare and other sophisticated pursuit.

**2. Folk culture:** refers to the culture of ordinary people, particularly those living in pre-industrial societies.

— Folk culture is often taken to arise from the grassroots, is self-created and autonomous and directly reflects the lives and experiences of the people.

— Examples of folk culture include traditional folk songs and traditional stories that have been handed down from generation to generation.

**3. Mass culture:** If folk culture is seen as characteristic of premodern, pre-industrial societies, mass culture is a product of industrial societies.

— It is the set of ideas and values that develop from a common exposure to the same media, news sources, music and art.

— It is thus essentially a product of the mass media.

— Some critics of mass culture see it as debasing (lower the value or reputation of someone or something) for the individual and destructive for the fabric of society.

— While ordinary people created folk culture, they only consume mass culture. From this viewpoint, the audience become passive members of a mass society, unable to think for themselves.

— Due to industrialization, urbanisation and rapid social mobility the primary groups are losing their significance and society becomes self-centered and forgets its regional cultural values and follows a relatively broad and universal culture. It is called Mass culture.

**Sub-culture:** are the cultural traits of a particular group.  
They are It is a culture within a broader mainstream culture, with its own separate values, practices and beliefs. For example Punjabi, Rajasthani culture are the sub-cultures of Indian culture.

**Global culture:** In terms of scale, the concept of global culture is at the opposite extreme to the idea of sub-culture.

— The idea of global culture implies that we are all becoming part of one all-embracing culture that affects all parts of the world.

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## SOCIALISATION

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- Socialisation refers to the process of learning or enculturation of cultural traits and values through the various agencies or sources especially parents, family, schools, peer groups etc.
- It is a continuous and life long process till to the end of life → It starts from the womb of the mother and continues lifelong. Different Sociologists have defined the process of Socialisation in different ways.
- According to John Macoris (American sociologist) Socialisation is the life long process by which an individual becomes the proper member of society and develops human character.
- Emory Bogardue (American sociologist) has defined Socialisation as "a process of learning to live and work together".
- Thus the Sociological meaning of Socialisation substances includes all the process of enculturation, communication and learning through which individual the human organism develops a social nature and is able to participate in social life.
- The 'Self' is developed by the socio-cultural environment, such as the group, the family, parents, Kinsfolk, Religion and so on.
- It's amid these groups that the individual becomes a social animal. It enables the learner to perform social roles.

### Characteristics of Socialisation

1. It is a process of learning
2. It is a life-long process
3. It is related to time and space
4. It is a process of cultural assimilation
5. It is a process of becoming a functioning member of the society
6. It is the development of the self
7. It is a process of cultural transmission.

### Functions of Socialisation in the Society

1. It converts humans from biological being to social being
2. It contributes in personality development
3. It helps to perform different roles
4. It establishes knowledge and skills
5. It contributes in the stability of social order
6. It transmits culture from one generation to another
7. It creates right aspirations in social life.

## Major Agencies or Institutions of Socialization

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① Family: The parents or the family are the first to socialize the child. They are not only closely related to the child but physically also they are nearer to him than others. In family he learns a number of civil virtues. The family is rightly called the cradle of social virtues. The child gets the first lesson in cooperation, tolerance and sacrifice, love and affection in the family. The psychologists have shown that a person is what he becomes in a family.

② The School: The School is a second agency of socialization. In the School the child gets his education which moulds his ideals and attitudes. A good education makes the child a good citizen while a bad education can turn him into a criminal. Education is of great importance in Socialization.

③ The playmates or Friends: The child acquires something from his playmates which he cannot acquire from his parents. From them he acquires cooperative morality and some of the informal aspects of culture like fashion, fads, ~~craze~~ crazes, modes of gratification and forbidden knowledge such as sexual knowledge which a parent cannot transfer directly to the children.

④ Neighbourhood: The children of the neighbour play an important role in the socialization process. The impact of neighbourhood is more profound in the rural areas than in the urban areas. The self-concept of the children is largely shaped by the appreciation of their neighbours.

⑤ Religion: In early society religion provided a bond of unity. Though in modern society the importance of religion has diminished, yet it continues to mould our beliefs and ways of life. In every family home or other religious practices are observed on one or the other occasion. The child sees his parents going to the temple and performing religious ceremonies. He listens to religious sermons which may determine his course of life and shape his ideas.

## SOCIAL CONTROL

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- Society uses certain sanctions - to enforce a standard of behaviour that is deemed socially acceptable. Individuals and institutions utilize social control to establish social norms and rules which can be exercised by peers or friends, family, state and religious organizations, schools and the workplace.
- Social control is ~~the~~ a system of measures, suggestions, persuasions, restraints and coercion by whatever means including physical force by which a society brings into conformity to the approved pattern of behaviour or ~~subgroup~~ or by which a group moulds into conformity its members. Society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour.
- According to T.B. Bottomore, "Social control may be regarded as referring to the aggregate of values and norms by means of which tensions and conflicts between individuals and groups are resolved or mitigated in order to maintain the solidarity of some more inclusive group and also to the arrangements through which these values and norms are communicated and instilled."
- Thus social control is very essential and in fact inevitable for smooth and harmonious running of society. Without social control it shall be impossible to have social progress and there will be social disorganisation and social stratification.

### Types of Social Control:

- Social control can be direct as well as indirect.
- Direct social control is exercised through primary groups e.g. family, play group whose praise or condemnation influences and determine the behaviour of an individual. On the other hand indirect control is the one which is exercised by secondary groups and such factors which are separate from it e.g. traditions, customs, institutions etc.
- Social control can be exercised through positive and negative means. Social recognition, fame and respect are positive means of social control whereas physical punishment and extradition are negative means of social control.
- In addition to the above mentioned means of social control some sociologists have classified the social control into formal and informal means.

- Sympathy, sociability, resentment, the sense<sup>(2)</sup> of justice, public opinion, folkways and mores are some of the informal means of social control. They are very powerful in primary social groups where interaction is on a personal base. The effectiveness of such the informal devices of control, though somewhat lessened in modern large communities (wherein contracts tend to be impersonal), may still be observed in small villages.

- Formal control is one which is specifically designed for the purpose e.g. government, law, etc. In modern times the informal methods have given place to formal means of control.

### Various Means / agencies of Social Control

- ① Customs ② Beliefs ③ Folkways ④ Public opinion
- ⑤ Social suggestions ⑥ Mores ⑦ Family ⑧ Religion
- ⑨ Social ideals ⑩ Law ⑪ Satire ⑫ Education etc.

## Social change

Social change in Sociology means the alteration of mechanisms within the social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behavior, social organizations or value system.

- Change is natural for every society and even if any society makes any attempt to stall social change that shall be an impossible task.
- According to Gillin and Gillin, "Social changes are variations from the accepted modes of life, whether due to alterations in geographical conditions, in cultural equipment, composition of the population or ideologies and whether brought about by diffusion or invention within the group."
- MacIver has given a very simple definition of the term by saying that 'social change is change in social relationships'.

## Characteristics:

- ① Social change is a universal phenomena
- ② Social change is a community change
- ③ The Speed of social change is not uniform
- ④ The nature and speed of social change is affected by and related to time factor
- ⑤ Social change occurs as an essential law
- ⑥ Definite prediction of social change is not possible.
- ⑦ Social change results from the interaction of a number of factors

## Sources of Social Change:

- b. - Sociologists have broadly classified the entire sources of change into two categories. These are as follows
- ① Exogenous or External Source of change  
- Tension, Pressure and Conflict is always present in every society and social system is vastly influenced by it.

- ④ Change in individuals. In social life individuals also change continually in terms of both biology as well as social and economic aspects associated with it.
- ⑤ Cultural Base. Some cultures have inherent characteristics that encourage inventions and discoveries. Culture that resists change and relies much on practices lacks the curiosity for new discoveries.

#### ⑥ Inventions and Discoveries:

- ⑥ Tendencies and values: In some societies the individuals' socialisation is done in such a way that they naturally tend towards new things and research. The societies that emphasise independent activity and initiatives in children have more ability for change.

### 2 Exogenous or External Sources of change.

- Exogenous causes include social, cultural and physical conditions
- ① Social conditions: A group, society or country also changes because of the influence of other groups, societies or nations. like, Migration, war, industrialization, Trade, Means of communication, and Social, religious, political movements of other societies and their influence.

- ② Physical Environment: The following conditions of physical environment quickens social change

- ① Drought ② Flood ③ Earthquake ④ Deforestation ⑤ pollution

- ⑥ Destruction of wildlife. etc.
- All these conditions are related to one another. Natural calamities may hasten the process of migration. Natural calamities may affect agriculture and industrial production, increase prices of commodities and trade.

## Factors of Social Change:

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① **Ecological factors of Social Change:** Included the physical environment and geographical conditions. Human society is deeply influenced by place, land, water, air, forest, river, sea and natural resources. If there are no rains a situation of drought will commence and there will be no crops. The situation of extreme drought may cause famine which may kill people. Excessive rainfall may cause floods which may lead to loss of life and property. People living in a particular region adapt themselves to the ecology of that place. However a process of conflict, control and adaptation goes on between man and his environment. All these processes are part of social change and at the same time also expedite the pace of the change.

② **Biological factors:** Biological processes like human procreation, fertility, death rate, migration, density of population also influence social change. Excessive increase in population affects the resource, quality, health and welfare programmes of the society. The increasing pressure of population is the cause of increasing poverty in many developing countries. Migration from the village increases the process of urbanisation. In societies where there is more population their way of living and economic standard is different from those where population is less.

### ③ Demographic factors of Social change.

The demographic elements such as population, birth rate, death rate, migration, sex ratio, literacy rate, old age population, working population etc affect the social structure, social organisation and economy of the society. The population affects the nature of family, marriage, poverty, unemployment.

④ **Psychological Factors:** Some of our modern sociologists including Gillin and Gillin, believe that psychological factors is most effective factor in bringing about social change. According to them people of course keep old traditions and customs and do not wish violent changes but at the same time they wish that gradually old order should be replaced by the new one. They keep the old but at the

Same time desire that society should be dynamic ⑩

**Technological factors of social change.** There is no dispute over the fact that technology brings far reaching and fundamental changes in our social set up. Our modern society is the outcome and product of modern technology. Technology affects society greatly in that a variation in technology causes variations in some institutions and customs. It is due to technological environment that we come close to each other and our way of living, thinking and behaving has changed. Every technological invention changes the very outlook of our life! The introduction of machine technology as a result of discoveries of the new sources of energy has had far reaching consequences that it is often called 'The age of revolution'. The present age is often called 'The age of power', 'The Scientific age'. Mechanization has changed not only the economic structure of society but has also led to the steady devolution of old forms of social organization and old ideologies. Ogburn says, "Technology changes society by changing one environment to which we in turn adapt. This change is usually in the material environment and the adjustment we make with change often modifies customs and social institution". Today there is no aspect of human life which has not been influenced by technology. Therefore technology is very important factor of social change.