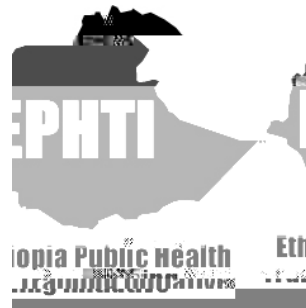


## LECTURE NOTES

For Health Science Students

# *Introduction to Sociology*



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Debu University

In collaboration with the Ethiopia Public Health Training Initiative, The Carter Center,  
the Ethiopia Ministry of Health, and the Ethiopia Ministry of Education

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## PREFACE

Sociology is a discipline that belongs to what conventionally is called the social science. The discipline plays a leading role in the social sciences. The term *sociology* literally means the science of society; for the term itself in its direct sense denotes that. Sociology as an academic discipline arose in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century (in 1837, to mention the exact year) as a special science dedicated to unravel the fundamental laws governing the societal phenomena and human social relationship with primary interest in analyzing the problems and societies of the modern, western world. It has, thus, conventionally been accepted to associate sociology with the study of the modern, industrialized societies of western world.

Health science students learning this discipline have a great advantage of gaining fresh insights and practical benefits in their personal lives and professional practices. Sociology along with other sisterly disciplines such as anthropology, economics, social psychology, human/ cultural geography, history and political sciences has now become an essential component of

the health and medical sciences curricula in universities and other training institutions abroad. Following this example, similar institutions in Ethiopia have also included this course in their curricula.

These lecture notes on introductory sociology are prepared for the health and medical sciences students in institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia. Its purpose is to provide the students with basic ideas and knowledge in the science of sociology. By learning the materials presented in this lecture notes, it is believed that students will be able to understand and appreciate the basic issues, principles and approaches of sociology. Students may also gain an indirect benefit of appreciating the social, cultural, and behavioral dimensions of health and disease.

Specifically, the main learning objective of introduction to sociology is to familiarize the students with the basic ideas, issues, concepts and principles of sociology. Students will be able to describe the meaning, scope, methods, history and importance of sociology, and its relations to other disciplines. The students will also be able to appreciate the relevance of sociology in their

personal and future professional practice. A brief discussion of the survey of social problems in contemporary Ethiopian society will also help them understand their nature, causes and types; and their relations to health and disease.

The lecture notes are organized into seven chapters: the First Chapter introduces important introductory issues such as the definition, subject-matter, theories, history importance and basic research methods of sociology, and its relationship to other disciplines. Chapter Two discusses the concepts of society and culture that are central to sociology. In Chapter Three, the concept of socialization is discussed. Here, the meaning, bases, necessity, goals and types of socialization are important issues of the chapter. Chapter Four deals with some aspects of social organization and social interaction. Three important dimensions of social processes, namely, social stratification, social mobility and social change will be discussed in Chapter Five, while an overview of social pathologies (focusing on Ethiopia) and methods of social action and intervention will be dealt in the Sixth and Seventh Chapters, respectively.

Each chapter begins with learning objectives, ends with a chapter summary and has review questions. Inside the text, there are illustrative boxes, tables and figures which are meant to aid the students in utilizing the notes more effectively. Throughout the text, key terms and concepts are highlighted in bold and they are put in glossary section for easy reference. Important references used in preparing these lecture notes are also cited in the text and they are put in bibliographical section. However, it is advisable to use the lecture notes as *complementary* materials. Students should refer to the textbooks and other references for detailed and richer knowledge.

The author wishes an enjoyable and fruitful reading for the students.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Last but not least, I want to express my deep gratitude to the national reviewers: Dr Gebre Yntiso and Dr Teketel Abebe of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, who spared their precious time to review these lecture notes. They have made valuable comments I say, “thank you very much!”

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*Zerihun D. Doffana, MA, Social Anthropology*

*June 2005*



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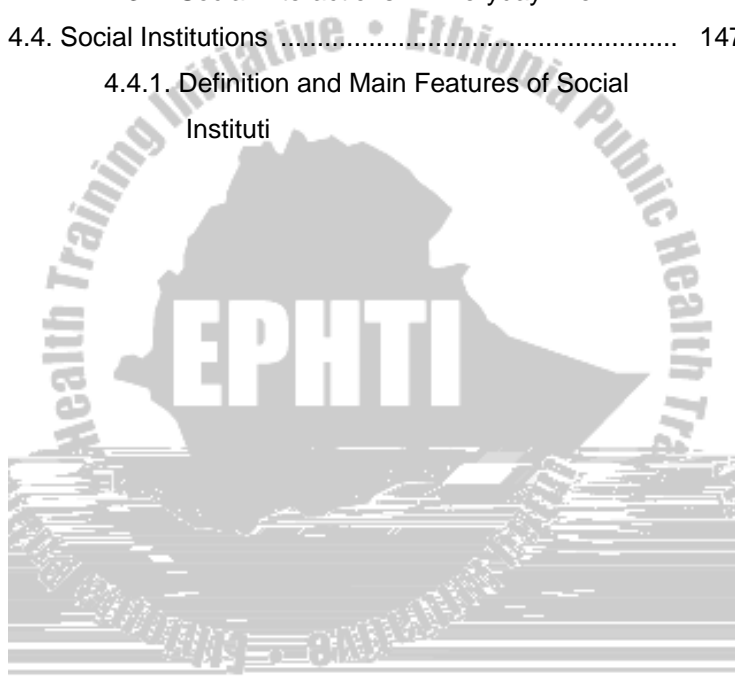
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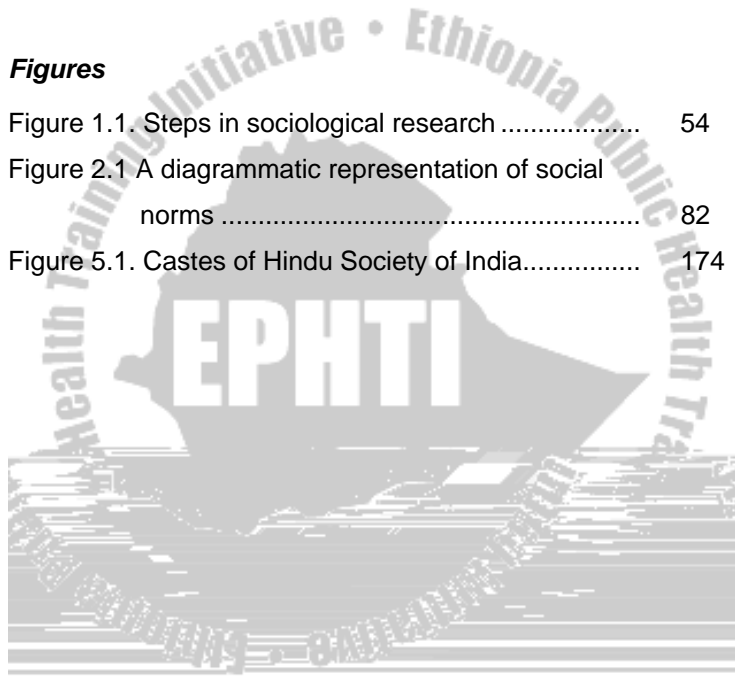


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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Learning Objectives

At the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

- Define the term sociology;
- Describe the subject-matter, scope and basic concerns of sociology;
- Understand how sociology emerged and developed;
- Appreciate the personal and professional benefits





generally understood as *study* or *science* (Indrani, 1998). Thus, the etymological, literal definition of *sociology* is that it is *the word or speaking about society*. A simple definition *here* is that it is the study of **society** and **culture**.

**Box 1.1. A simple definition of sociology**

Sociology is the study of society

Although the term “sociology” was first used by the French social philosopher August Comte, the discipline was more firmly established by such theorists as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber (Nobbs, Hine and Flemming, 1978).

Before going any further, let us note that the concepts “society and “culture” are central in sociology. While each concept shall be dealt with later in some detail, it appears to be appropriate here to help students differentiate between these two important concepts. Society generally refers to the social world with all its structures, institutions, organizations, etc around us, and specifically to a group of people who live within some

type of bounded territory and who share a common way of life. This common way of life shared by a group of people is termed as culture (Stockard, 1997).

**Box 1.2. Distinguishing between society and culture**

**Society:** a group of people who live within some type of bounded territory and who share a common way of life

**Culture:** is common way of life shared by a society or a group.

Now, turning to the definitional issues, it is important that in addition to this etymological definition of the term, we need to have other substantive definitions. Thus, sociology may be generally defined as a social science that studies such kinds of phenomena as:

- The structure and function of society as a system;
- The nature, complexity and contents of human social behavior;
- The fundamentals of human social life;

- 



attempts to formulate theories and generalizations that will make sense of facts (Giddens, 1982).

Regarding the detective and expository nature the science, Soroka (1992:34) states that “Sociology is a debunking science; that is, it looks for levels of reality other than those presented in official interpretations of society and people’s common sense explanations of the social world. Sociologists are interested in understanding what is and do not make value judgments.”

### **1.1.2. Brief Historical Overview**

Sociology and other social sciences emerged from a common tradition of reflection of social phenomena; interest in the nature of human social behavior and society has probably always existed; however, most people in most past societies saw their culture as a fixed and god-given entity. This view gradually was replaced by more rational explanations beginning from the 17<sup>th</sup> century especially in Western Europe (Rosenberg, 1987). The sociological issues, questions and problems

had been raised and discussed by the forerunners starting from the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers' and Hebrew prophets' times.

Sociology as an academic science was thus born in 19<sup>th</sup> century (its formal establishment year being 1837) in Great Britain and Western Europe, especially in France and Germany, and it greatly advanced through out 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>





technology. These revolutions had brought about significant societal changes and disorders in the way society lived in the aforementioned countries. Since sociology was born amidst the great socio-political and economic and technological changes of the western world, it is said to be the science of modern society.

The pioneering sociologists were very much concerned about the great changes that were taking place and they felt that the existing sciences could not help understand, explain, analyze and interpret the fundamental laws that govern the social phenomena. Thus sociology was born out of these revolutionary contexts.

The founders or the pioneering sociologists are the following (Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Giddens, 1996; Macionis, 1997):

- **Auguste Comte, French Social Philosopher (1798- 1857)**

Comte was the first social philosopher to coin and use the term sociology (Nobbs, Hine and Flemming, 1978). He was also the first to regard himself as a sociologist.

He defined sociology as the scientific study of social dynamics and social static. He argued that sociology can and should study society and social phenomena following the pattern and procedures of the natural science. Comte believed that a theoretical science of society and the systematic investigation of human behavior were needed to improve society. He argued that the new science of society could and should make a critical contribution towards a new and improved human society. Comte defined sociology as the study of **social dynamic**

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concepts in sociology like **social class**, **social class conflict**, social oppression, **alienation**, etc. Marx, like Comte, argued that people should make active efforts to bring about societal reforms. According to Marx, economic forces are the keys to understanding society and social change. He believed that the history of human society has been that of **class conflict**. He dreamed of, and worked hard towards realizing, a classless society, one in which there will be no exploitation and oppression of one class by another, and wherein all individuals will work according to their abilities and receive according to their needs. Marx introduced one of the major perspectives in sociology, called **social conflict theory** (Macionis, 1997)

- **Harriet Martineau, British Sociologist (1802-1876)**

At a time when women were greatly stereotyped and denied access to influential socio-political and academic arena, it is interesting to have a female academic to be numbered among the pioneering sociologists. Harriet was interested in social issues and studied both in the United States and England. She came across with the

writings of Comte and read them. She was an active advocate of the abolition of slavery and she wrote on many crosscutting issues such as racial and gender relations, and she traveled widely. She helped popularize the ideas and writings of Comte by translating them into English (Henslin and Nelson, 1995).

- **Herbert Spencer, British Social Philosopher, (1820-1903)**

Spencer was a prominent social philosopher of the 19th century. He was famous for the organic analogy of human society. He viewed society as an organic system, having its own structure and functioning in ways analogous to the biological system. Spencer's ideas of the evolution of human society from the lowest ("barbarism") to highest form ("civilized") according to fixed laws were famous. It was called "**Social Darwinism**", which is analogous to the biological evolutionary model. Social Darwinism is the attempt to apply by analogy the evolutionary theories of plant and animal development to the explanation of human society and social phenomena (Team of Experts, 2000).

- **Emile Durkheim, French Sociologist, (1858-1917)**

Durkheim was the most influential scholar in the academic and theoretical development of sociology. He laid down some of the fundamental principles, methods, concepts and theories of sociology; he defined sociology as the study of **social facts**. According to him, there are social facts, which are distinct from biological and psychological facts. By social facts, he meant the patterns of behavior that characterize a social group in a given society. They should be studied objectively. The job of a sociologist, therefore, is to uncover social facts and then to explain them using other social facts. Some regard Durkheim as the first sociologist to apply statistical methods to the study of social phenomena (Macionis, 1997; Clahoun, *et al*, 1994).

- **Max Weber, German Sociologist (1864-1920)**

Weber was another prominent social scientist. According to him, sociology is the scientific study of human **social action**. Social action refers to any “action oriented to influence or influenced by another person or persons. It is not necessary for more than one person to

be physically present for action to be regarded as social action....” (Team of Experts, 2000). It is concerned with the interpretive understanding of human social action and the meaning people attach to their own actions and behaviors and those of others. Weber was a renowned scholar who like Marx, wrote in several academic fields. He agreed with much Marxian theses but did not accept his idea that economic forces are central to social change. Weber argues that we cannot understand human behavior by just looking at statistics. Every activity and behavior of people needs to be interpreted. He argued that a sociologist must aim at what are called **subjective meanings**, the ways in which people interpret their own behavior or the meanings people attach their own behavior (Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Rosneberg, 1987).

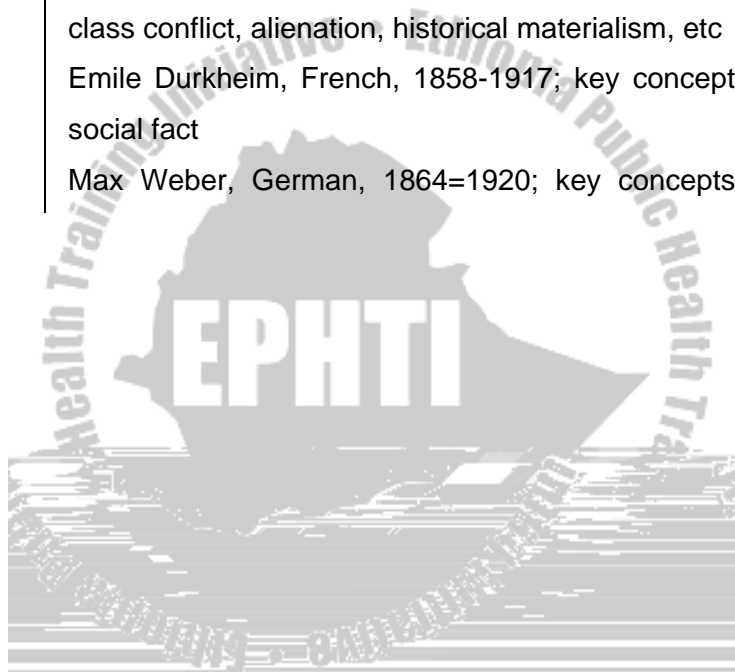
**Box 1.3. Pioneering founders of sociology**

August Comte, French, 1798-1857; key concepts:  
social static and social dynamic

Karl Marx, German, (1818-1883), key concepts:  
class conflict, alienation, historical materialism, etc

Emile Durkheim, French, 1858-1917; key concept:  
social fact

Max Weber, German, 1864=1920; key concepts:



conditions; all types of human relationships and forms of social behavior (Indrani, 1998). Sociologists are primarily interested in human beings as they appear in social interaction and the effects of this interaction on







focuses on **social interaction**. It analyzes interpersonal relationships, and on what people do and how they behave when they interact. This level of analysis is



Within these general frameworks, sociology may be divided into specific sub-fields on the basis of certain criteria. The most important fields of sociology can be grouped into six areas (*World Book Encyclopedia, 1994: Vol. 18; Pp. 564-568*).

- **The Field of Social Organization and Theory of Social Order:** focuses on institutions and groups, their formation and change, manner of functioning, relation to individuals and to each other.
- **Social Control:** Focuses on the ways in which members of a society influence one another so as to maintain social order.
- **Social Change:** Focuses on the way society and institutions change over time through technical inventions, cultural diffusion and cultural conflict, and social movements, among others.
- **Social Processes:** Focuses on the pattern in which social change takes place, and the modes of such processes.

- **Social Groups:** Focuses on how social groups are formed, structured, and how they function and change.
- **Social Problems:** Focuses on the social conditions which cause difficulties for a large number of persons and which the society is seeking to eliminate. Some of the problems may include: juvenile delinquency, crime, chronic alcoholism, suicide, narcotics addiction, racial prejudice, ethnic conflict, war, industrial conflict, slum, areas, urban poverty, prostitution, child abuse, problem of older persons, marital conflicts, etc.

Currently, sociology has got quite several specific subdivisions or fields of specialization in it: some of these include the following: criminology; demography; human ecology; political sociology; medical sociology; sociology of the family; sociology of sports; sociology of development; social psychology; socio- linguistics; sociology of education; sociology of religion; sociology of knowledge; sociology of art; sociology of science and

technology; sociology of law; urban sociology; rural sociology; economic sociology; and industrial sociology.

### **1.1.5. Major Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology**

Sociology as science employs perspectives or theories to understand, explain, analyze and interpret social phenomena. To interpret social facts, they must be subjected to a theoretical framework. A theory may be defined as a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work (Macionis, 1997). Scupin and DeCorse (1995) define a theory as a set of interconnected hypotheses that offer general explanations for natural or social phenomena.

It should also be noted that the terms “perspectives” and “schools of thought” are often used interchangeably with the term “theory”.

There are three major theoretical perspectives in sociology that have provided an overall framework for sociological studies. These are **structural-functionalism**, social **conflict theory** and **symbolic interactionism**.



structure is understood in terms of **social function**, which are consequences for the operations of society. All social structure contributes to the operation of society. The major terms and concepts developed by anthropologists and sociologists in this theory include (or the theory focuses on): order, structure, function (manifest or direct functions and latent or hidden, indirect functions), and equilibrium.

Those who hold this view ask such questions as: what holds society together? What keeps it steady? The Structural-functional theory pays considerable attention to the persistence of shared ideas in society. The functional aspect in the structural-functional theory stresses the role played by each component part in the social system, whereas the structural perspective suggests an image of society wherein individuals are constrained by the social forces, social backgrounds and by group memberships.

Many of the great early founding sociologists such as August Comte, Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer and later American sociologists like Talcott Parsons and

Robert K Merton. Structural -functionalist theorists in modern sociology are more likely to follow in the tradition of the writings of particularly Emile Durkheim, who is regarded as the pioneering proponent of this perspective (Henslin and Nelson, 1995).

After dominating sociology and anthropology for a long time, this theory was challenged by its main critics, notably those who proposed the social –conflict theory (see *below*). The theory was attacked for its emphasis on stability and order while neglecting conflict and changes which so vital in any society.

### **The Social Conflict Theory**

This theory is also called Marxism; to indicate that the main impetus to the theory derives from the writings of Karl Marx. This theory sees society in a framework of class conflicts and focuses on the struggle for scarce resources by different groups in a given society. It asks such questions as what pulls society apart. How does society change? The theory holds that the most important aspect of social order is the domination of some group by others, that actual or potential conflicts



are always present in society. The writings of Karl Marx are generally in the spirit of conflict theory, and Marxism influences most of conflict theorists in modern sociology.

The theory is useful in explaining how the dominant groups use their power to exploit the less powerful groups in society. Key concepts developed in this perspective include: conflict, complementation, struggle, power, inequality, and exploitation.

Although this theory gained fame in recent decades, it came under sharp criticism, for its overemphasis on inequality and division, for neglecting the fact of how shared values and interdependence generate unity among members of society; it is also criticized for its explicit political goals. Another critique, which equally applies also to structural functionalism, is that it sees society in very broad terms, neglecting micro-level social realities (Macionis 1997).

### **Symbolic Interactionism**

This theory was advanced by such American sociologists as Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929) William I Thomas (1863-1947) and George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) in early 20th century. This



## **Feminism**

This theory takes as its central theme the place and facts of women's underprivileged status and their exploitation in a patriarchally dominated society.

Feminist sociology focuses on the particular disadvantages, includ



**Public Choice Theory:** This theory states that collective organizations such as political parties act rationally to maximize their own benefits. It argues that individual differences are best resolved by collective involvement within organizations. The role of the state is important in arbitrating between large-scale interests (*ibid, same page*).

**Rational Choice Theory:** This theory assumes that individuals will operate in rational way and will seek to benefit themselves in the life choices they make (*ibid*).

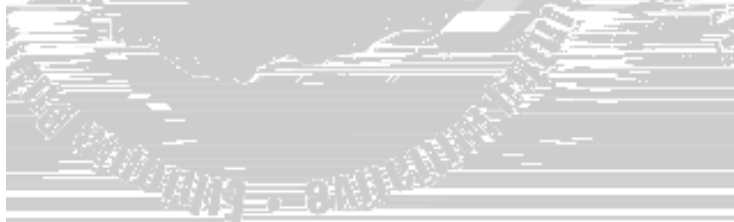
### **Structuralism**

This theory denies any basis for humans being active, since human consciousness is no longer seen as the basis of meaning in language. Structuralism differs from the mainstream traditional theories in that it rejects objective social facts and a concept of society as an objective, external entity. It defines social reality in terms of the relations between events, not in terms of things and social facts. Its basic principle is that the observable is meaningful only in so far as it can be related to an underlying structure or order (Swingwood, 1984).



have some relationship to the real world. It is not possible to arrive at a sociological truth, and such attempts are dangerous (Bliton, *et al.* 1996; Kirby, *et al.* 2000).

**Post-modernism:** The basis of post-modernism was post-structuralism. Post-modernism is defined as a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon which mainly rejects order and progress, objective and universal truth; and supports the need for recognizing and tolerating different forms of reality. It tends to celebrate chaos and disorder, diversity and fragmentation in the modern global society rather than wanting to achieve order. This



A note on applying sociological theories to health,



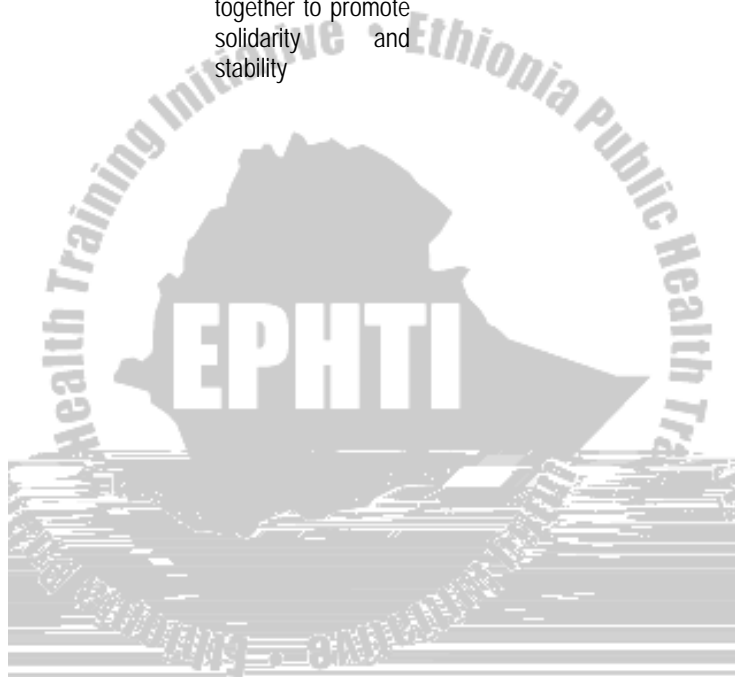
According to this theory, illnesses and health are not just things that exist “out there”; they are productions of the complex social interactions; and health and illness are highly shaped by the manner in which people as actors give meanings to them and how the actors respond to them in socio-culturally sanctioned ways.

- Conflict theory: The equivalent of this theory in medical sociology and anthropology may be termed as “the critical” or “radical political economy” approach. It is an approach which stresses on the socio-economic inequality in power and wealth which in turn significantly affects the health status and access to health care facilities. Individuals, groups, communities and even nations thus tend to have unbalanced



**Table 1.1. Summary of sociological theories**

S. No.	Name of the theory	What does it state?	Key concepts	Its weaknesses
1.	Structural Functionalism	Sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability	Consensus, socn2eeorder,	



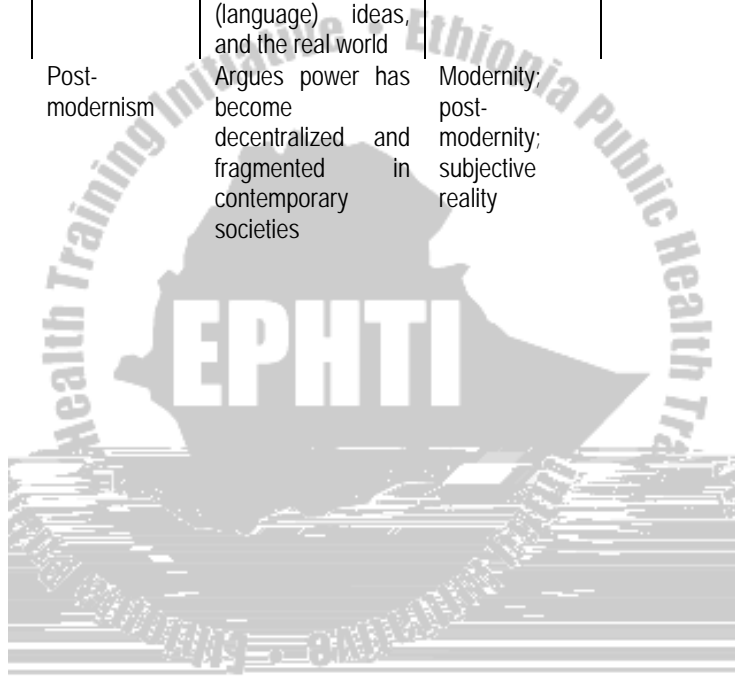
4	Feminism	Feminist sociology focuses on the particular disadvantages, including oppression and exploitation faced by women in society	Women; gender; exploitation; male supremacy	Some extreme views such as radical feminism seem unrealistic
5.	Social Exchange theory	Focuses on the costs and benefits which people obtain in social interaction, including money, goods, and status. It is based on the principle that people always act to maximize benefit.	-	-
6.	Rational choice theory	Assumes that individuals will operate in rational way and will seek to benefit themselves in the life choices they make	--	--
7.	Structuralism	Denies any basis for humans being active, since human consciousness is no longer seen as the basis of meaning in language	Underlying structures; language	Views societies as static and do not help very much in explaining variation among societies; treats culture as a given order and fails to explain the adaptive dimensions of culture.

8.	Post-structuralism	Argues that humans cannot arrive anything they can confidently call the (universal) truth. There is no link between the words (language) ideas, and the real world	--	--
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Post-modernism

Argues power has become decentralized and fragmented in contemporary societies

Modernity; post-modernity; subjective reality



imagination helps us look beyond individual psychology to the many and varied facets of social and cultural forces, and "the recurring patterns in peoples' attitudes and actions, and how these patterns vary across time, cultures and social groups." (Henslin and Nelson, 1995)

Learning sociology helps us understand how social forces influence our goals, attitudes, behavior, and personality. We become more sensitive towards the social issues. Furthermore, learning sociology helps to cast aside our own biased assumptions, stereotypes and ethno-centric thinking and practices to become more critical, broad-minded and respectful in our interpersonal and inter-group relationships. By learning sociology, we can be more humane and people-centered; we give high value to human dignity.

In general, sociology increases our self-knowledge. Learning sociology can provide us with self-enlightenment. When we learn sociology, we gain more knowledge about the conditions of our own lives, and about the way our society and social system function. As such knowledge increases, we can be more

empowered to influence the direction of forces and circumstances that affect our lives. We can also be more responsive to the various policies set by governments; and can suggest our own policy initiatives and alternatives (Giddens, *op cit*).

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical benefits, sociology has certain practical benefits. There is what we call **applied sociology**, the application of sociological knowledge, principles, methods, concepts and theories to provide the solutions to the contemporary social pathologies. Sociology plays practical roles to tackle social pathologies.

Sociological knowledge is highly applicable in dealing with today's most crucial social problems, and in facilitating developmental activities in socioeconomic sectors.

Before closing this section, it is important to note why health/ medical sciences students need to take a course in introductory sociology. The following are some of the arguments for the necessity of such a course:

1. Health, disease and illness are as much sociocultural in their nature as they are physical.
2. So far, despite certain steps being taken, the dominant trend in the medical/ health sciences training is to highly focus on the biomedical and ecological dimensions of health and disease. However, given the bio-psycho-social nature of human being and health, this is very partial. This restricted approach to health disease does not provide the students with appropriate and whole picture about the issue. Such highly narrow focus in the training of health professionals and design of health policies and strategies is not appropriate.
3. In the objective realities of developing societies such as Ethiopia human health and well-being are deeply linked to sociocultural factors such as the entrenched poverty, the roles of traditional values and institutions in shaping people's worldviews about health and disease.

## 1.3. Sociological Research Methods

### 1.3.1. The Scientific Method Inductive vs. Deductive Approaches

Sociology is a science. As such, it is concerned with systematically observing and classifying facts, and establishing verifiable laws. It, like any other science employs **scientific method**, which is the source for scientific knowledge. The scientific method is a logical system used to evaluate data derived from systematic observation. The scientific method as a precise way of designing and conducting research consists of the following basic steps: “(1) establishing a hypothesis, a general statement based on observed facts; 2) determining ways to test the hypothesis, incorporating them in research design; 3) testing the hypothesis through research and further observation...” (Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1992:7)

Sociology as a science employs the two very important approaches in research design and in the overall research framework: **inductive methods** and

**deductive method.** Inductive method is a method by which the scientist first makes observation and collects data, on the basis of which he or she formulates **hypothesis** and **theories (Scupin and DeCorse, 1995)**. The researcher tries to build theories from particular observations and instances. Induction moves from the particular to the general; where as deduction moves from the general to the particular. In deductive





As a science, the primary aim of sociology is doing research; to produce, accumulate, and disseminate scientific knowledge on society and social phenomena. However, there are some people who question the scientific status of sociology and other social sciences. They argue that sociology is not strictly science because its subject matter is very much complex. It is not possible to subject human behavior into laboratory manipulations. People have their own motives and hidden aspirations and other complex aspects.

However, it is generally accepted that sociology is a science in the sense that its primary aim is doing scientific research to promote scientific knowledge. Sociology can and should employ the scientific methods. The scientific method is defined as a method of observing the world critically, empirically and rationally to collect and analyze data systematically to arrive at a scientific knowledge.

### **1.3.2. Steps in Sociological Research**

Generally, there are about seven steps in doing a sociological research. These steps are not, however, typical to sociology alone. It should also be noted that these steps are not fixed ones. Some steps may not necessarily be followed in some research projects. They steps may not necessarily be put in sequential order.

#### **1. Identification of Research Problems**

The first step in doing sociological research (for that matter, any other research) is to come up with a research problem. Identification of research problem basically involves choosing a research topic. The ways and manners in which researchers identify a research problem and choose a topic vary according to various factors. The research interests of sociologists are, often, triggered by their own life experiences and observations (Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1992). The initial ideas for research thus may occur at any time and place for a researcher. Walking down a street, reading through newspapers, watching television, etc may suggest a

topic of research for an observing and curious person (Mann, 1976).

Once a research topic comes to our mind, we should ask the following questions:

- Is it researchable?
- Is it sociologically/ socially significant?
- What is new about it?
- What gap will it fill?
- Is it manageable in terms of time, money, expertise and other resources? In other words, do you have the needed resources to do the research?

If you answer these and other related questions adequately, then you are on the right track to conduct the research.

## **2. Literature Review**

This step involves familiarizing or orienting yourself with the concepts, theories and the works already done pertaining to the topic identified. Relevant available literature on the topic chosen should be reviewed; we

should also check out what works have already been done by others, what gaps are remaining, what questions remain unanswered, etc.

Research work normally proceeds by reviewing earlier works on a specific research problem one has identified. The researcher will need to review past works on the question he or she is raising (Dooley, 1995). The traditionally dominant source for literature review has been libraries and documentation centers where books and various references are found in card catalogued manner. Nowadays, most libraries maintain a computerized filing system, whereby references are made available via electronic online methods. Searching literature has become very easy, thus, with the computerization of library sources; one can easily access them if Internet connection is available (Rosnow and Rosenthal, 1996)

Literature review is necessitated by the fact that a researcher is probably not the first person to develop an interest in a particular problem; and hence, he or she need to spend some time in the library reviewing what

theories and methods others have used to the topic in the past and what findings are there (Macionis, 1997). According to Marshal and Rossman (1989: 35), review of literature has the following four purposes:

First, it demonstrates the underlying assumptions behind the general research question.... Second, it demonstrates that the researcher is thoroughly knowledgeable about related research and the intellectual traditions that surround and support the study. Third, it shows that the researcher has identified some gaps in previous research and that the proposed study will fill a demonstrated need. And finally, the review refines and redefines the research questions and related tentative hypotheses by embedding those questions in larger empirical traditions.

### **3. Hypothesis Formulation**

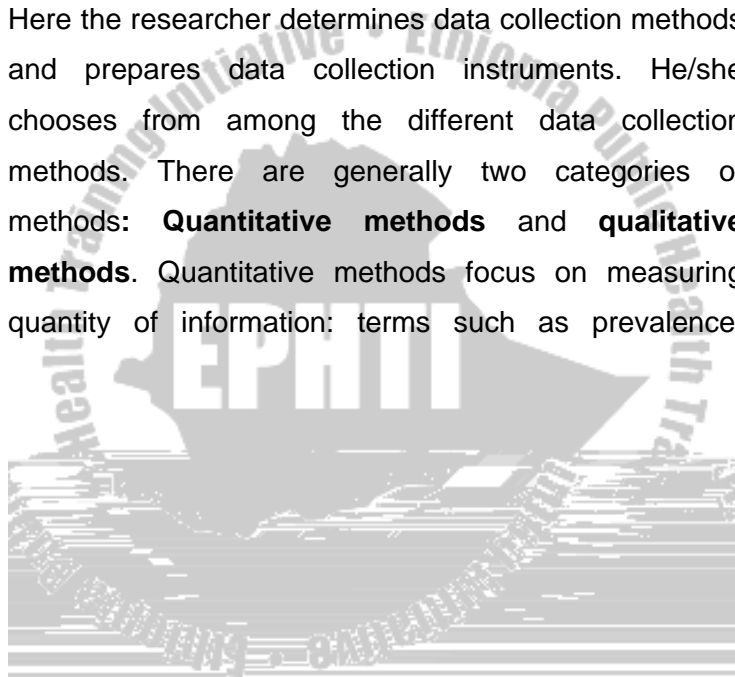
Hypothesis is a statement that can be proved to be correct or incorrect. Hypothesis formulation involves identifying basic research objectives and determining research questions. This should be tested empirically.

We put some guiding assumptions to the research in this step. We ask some basic research questions. However, we may note that this may not be always the case. The type of research may determine whether

hypothesizing is needed or not. For example, in exploratory studies hypothesizing may not be needed.

#### **4. Selections and Designing of Methods of Data Collection**

Here the researcher determines data collection methods and prepares data collection instruments. He/she chooses from among the different data collection methods. There are generally two categories of methods: **Quantitative methods** and **qualitative methods**. Quantitative methods focus on measuring quantity of information: terms such as prevalence,



collects the data. He/ she trains data collectors, supervises the overall data collection process, and so on.

Data collected thus may be of two types: **primary** and **secondary data**. Primary data are firsthand and original information; the researcher firsthand collects them. They are collected by the sociology themselves during their own research using research tools such as experiment, survey, questionnaire, interviews and observation (Chapman, 2000). On the other hand, secondary data are those which are already collected by some one else found in various sources as documents or archives. They include: official statistical documents, mass media sources (such as electronic media – radio, television, films, etc; and print media such as newspapers, magazines, journals, posters, brochures, leaflets, sign boards, etc.)

Some of the methods of data collection in sociology include:

## Surveys

One of the dominant quantitative techniques is the **survey method**, which involves sampling, impersonal data collections, and sophisticated statistical analysis. Of all the social sciences research techniques, survey research probably seems to be the most visible and pervasive form research in the social and behavioral sciences (Jones, 1995). . In survey research, people who provide information are termed as **respondents**, (unlike in anthropology, where we call them informants); these respondents are often selected on **random sample** basis, wherein all members of a population have equal chances of being included in the study population

There are three types of survey research: **cross sectional survey**, which aims to find out what opinions research participants across sections of society have about a certain phenomena at a given point of time his survey represents fixed reflections of one moment in time. **Longitudinal survey** is conducted on the same type of people over long period of time, as long as sometimes 20 to 30 years. This type provides us with a



moving picture of the changes over time in a given area. The third type is called **panel surveys**, which are alternative versions of longitudinal surveys. It usually lasts shorter period of time and asks questions of panel members on a frequent basis. A panel member may be asked question every month for a couple of years, while in longitudinal survey, people are asked often once a year (Moore, 2001).

Traditionally, the survey techniques has been considered the domain of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political science, and economics, which often work mainly in large, complex and populous societies, unlike anthropologists, which have traditionally worked among small-scale societies.

**Experimentation:** This quantitative method is sometimes used in sociology. Sociologists conduct experimental studies, following the procedures and principles of experimentation. This is done usually to explore cause and effect relationship between one and the other social phenomena. What causes what? What is the effect of one social phenomenon on the other?



**Case Study:** This method involves investigating a certain issue as a case taking longer time and investigating the phenomenon in depth. A case study may be about an individual person, a social group, a family, or an organization. The case chosen is regarded as a representative of the wider group or context from which it is derived. This method may involve elements of both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

**Observation:** This qualitative method involves collecting data on social phenomena by carefully observing the social processes, events, activities, behaviors, actions, etc., they take place. All relevant events, actions, places, objects, etc must be observed and recorded (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). One of the key procedures in these techniques is called **participant observation**, the active involvement in community life while studying it. The researcher participates in a research setting while observing what is happening in that setting (Henslin and Nelson, 1995). A variant of this method is **non-participant observation** – collecting data without participating in what the informants or the subjects do.

**Unobtrusive Measures:** Most of the research techniques are **obtrusive**, meaning the data are gathered while the study subjects' behaviors actions are directly observed, and they know that they are being researched. To avoid the risks of the research act intruding on the subject of study thereby affecting the research findings, sociologists have developed what is called unobtrusive measures. When a researcher takes unobtrusive measures, people's behavior is observed while they are not aware of it.

Here, this method involves techniques that do not interfere with the objects or events studied. Sociologist study many social phenomena using this methods such how people behave in the public arena, the way people wear and decorate themselves, the way they sit or stand relative to others, etc (Rosenberg, *et al*, 1987).

## **6. Data Organization, Analysis, Interpretation, and Report Writing**

The most challenging task is how to manage, handle, store and arrange the raw data as cautiously as

possible. Data may get lost, if not handled well. The researcher here carefully stores the data, manages them, organizes and systematically arranges.

Various ways of analyzing data are used both in **qualitative** and **quan**



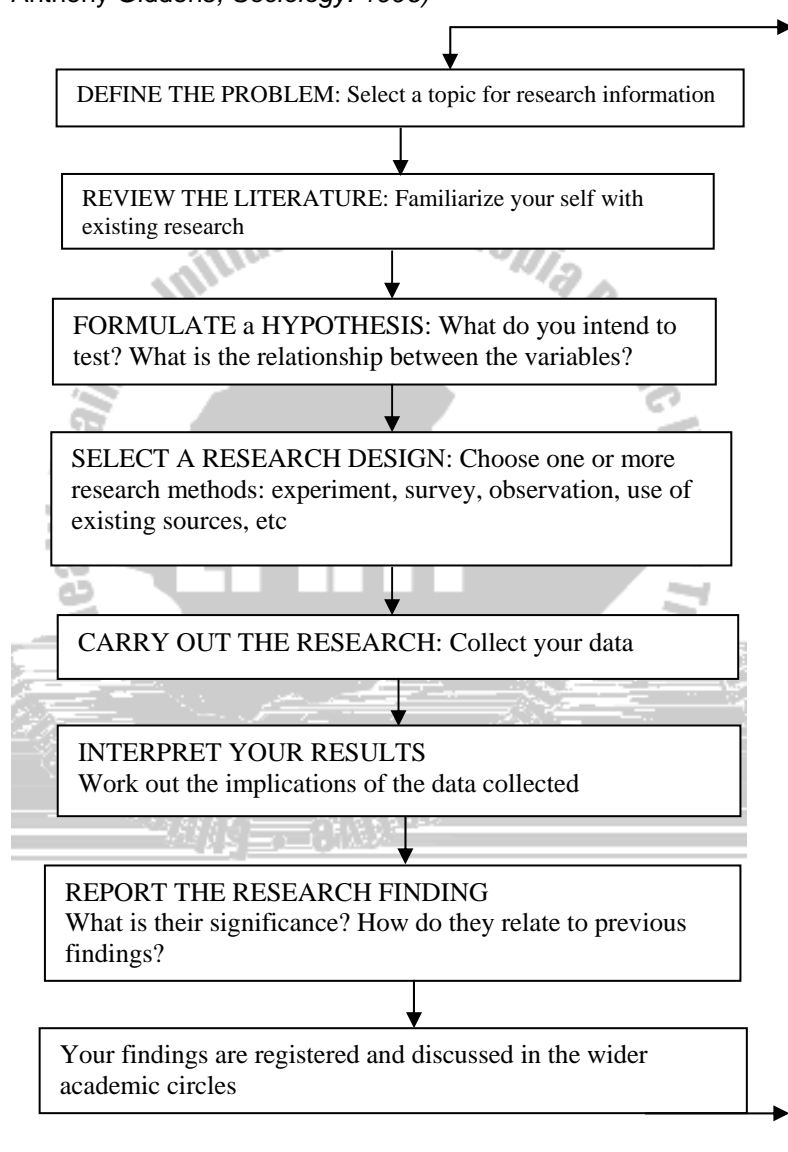
After the data are entered into a computer for easy processing, tabulation, and analysis, the researcher interprets the data and writes up the findings. The hypotheses are tested, comparisons are made with similar kinds of studies conducted elsewhere or done before, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are made, depending on the type of research, such as basic or applied.

### **7. Dissemination of Research Findings**

This is the final step in which the researcher shares the findings with all concerned bodies. Dissemination of the research findings is possible via scientific journals, seminars, symposiums, conferences and other forums.



Figure 1.1 Steps in the Research Process (Adapted from Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*. 1996)



## 1.4. The Relationship between Sociology and Disciplines

Sociology occupies an important position among the disciplines, usually called the social sciences. These include sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, political science, history and human geography. These disciplines are sometimes also referred to as behavioral sciences, as they study the principles governing human social behavior.

How is sociology related to other sciences? What are the similarities and differences?



However, sociology differs from other social sciences in terms of its focus of study, approach of study, and the method of study. The closest discipline to sociology is social anthropology. The two share concepts, theories and methods, and have similar historical background. However, they are different in that sociology is primarily interested in the problems of modern society, whereas anthropology is primarily interested in the problem of traditional, non-western society. (It should be noted here that this conventional distinction between the two is now disappearing.) Further, sociology focuses mainly on quantitative techniques where as anthropology on qualitative research techniques. Perhaps, the methods of research are more important in differentiating the two. Anthropology's heavy focus on qualitative method and sociology's on quantification are still persistent natures of the two disciplines. Further, one point of difference worth mentioning is that sociology is narrower in scope than anthropology, which has four sub fields; and anthropologists tend to stay in the field for long period (several months to few years) while sociologists prefer brief stay (weeks to few months).

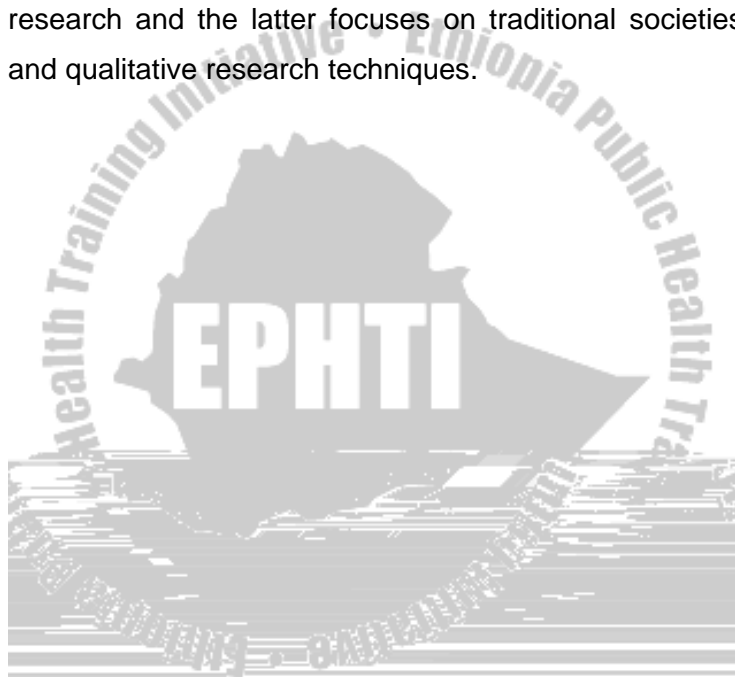
## 1.5. Chapter Summary

The term *sociology* is a combination of two words, *socius* and *logos*, which mean respectively *society* and *study*. Thus, a simple etymological definition of sociology is that it is the science of society. Sociology is a social or behavioral science that originated in the 19th century in Western Europe; its main concern is discovering the basic laws and principles that govern human social life, the social world, the working and development of society and its institutions. It grew out of the great revolutionary contexts, with great concern to address the social changes, disorders and problems of the modern world.

Micro-sociology studies the *micro* aspects of human society, that is the social processes and phenomena taking place at small scale levels; macro-sociology studies the *macro* aspects, that is, the overall structure, functioning, change, development and processes of social phenomena at large-scale levels. The six major fields of study in sociology are social organization and



methods, focus, unit of analysis, and approaches, it is different. The closest discipline to sociology is social anthropology; they share similar historical development, concepts, theories, and approaches; although the former focuses on modern societies and quantitative research and the latter focuses on traditional societies and qualitative research techniques.



## Review Questions

1. What is *sociology*? Explain it using your own words.
2. How can we differentiate sociology from other social sciences, which also study society and human culture?
3. Discuss the main sociopolitical and economic factors behind the emergence of sociology.
4. Mention at least five issues of sociological relevance in the contemporary society of Ethiopia.
5. Discuss the personal and professional benefits of learning sociology.
6. Consider the issue of students' sexual behavior in your University. Discuss those aspects that would be interesting to study for a sociologist. What aspects might *not* be interesting sociologically? Why?
7. Discuss the main differences between qualitative and quantitative methods of doing research.
8. Identify the factors to be considered when one is considering choosing a certain issue or issues as research topic.

## CHAPTER TWO

# SOCIETY AND CULTURE

### Learning Objectives

At learning this chapter, students will be able to:

- Define the concept of society;
- Describe the basic characteristics of a society;
- Conceptualize society as having different levels;
- Describe the different types of society on the basis of various parameters;
- Explain how society functions as a system;
- Define the concept of culture;
- Describe the basic features of culture;
- Identify the key elements of culture; and
- Understand other main concepts related to culture

## 2.1. The Concept of Society

### 2.1.1. Definition

The term *society* as mentioned earlier is derived from a Latin word *socius*. The term directly means *association, togetherness, gregariousness, or simply group life*. The concept of society refers to a relatively large grouping or collectivity of people who share more or less common and distinct culture, occupying a certain geographical locality, with the feeling of identity or belongingness, having all the necessary social arrangements or insinuations to sustain itself.

We may add a more revealing definition of society as defined by Calhoun *et al* (1994): "A society is an autonomous grouping of people who inhabit a common territory, have a common culture (shared set of values, beliefs, customs and so forth) and are linked to one another through routinized social interactions and interdependent statuses and roles." Society also may mean a certain populdefintm.84Wr thrf1

The common tendency in sociology has been to conceptualize society as a system, focusing on the bounded and integrated nature of society. Great founders of sociology had also focused on the dynamic aspect of society. Such early sociologists as Comte, Marx and Spencer grasped the concept of society as a dynamic system evolving historically and inevitably towards complex industrial structures (Swingwood, 1991:313).

The common tendency in sociology has been to conceptualize society as a system, focusing on the bounded and integrated nature of society. But in recent years such an approach has been criticized. Contemporary sociologists now frequently use the **network conception of society** (Swingwood, 1991:313).



### **2.1.2. Basic Features of a Society**

First, a society is usually a relatively large grouping of people in terms of size. In a very important sense, thus, society may be regarded as the largest and the most complex social group that sociologists study. Second, as the above definition shows, the most important thing about a society is that its members share common and distinct culture. This sets it apart from the other population groups. Third, a society also has a definite, limited space or territory. The populations that make up a given society are thus locatable in a definite geographical area. The people consider that area as their own. Fourth, the people who make up a society have the feeling of identity and belongingness. There is also the feeling of oneness. Such identity feeling emanates from the routinized pattern of social interaction that exists among the people and the various

Fifth, members of a society are considered to have a common origin and common historical experience. They feel that they have also common destiny. Sixth, members of a society may also speak a common mother tongue or a major language that may serve as a national heritage.

Seventh, a society is autonomous and independent in the sense that it has all the necessary social institutions and organizational arrangements to sustain the system. However, a society is not an *island*, in the sense that societies are interdependent. There has always been inter-societal relations. People interact socially, economically and politically.

It is important to note that the above features of a society are by no means exhaustive and they may not apply to all societies. The level of a society's economic and technological development, the type of economic or livelihood system a society is engaged in, etc may create some variations among societies in terms of these basic features.



linguistically distinct groups of people having a territory that they consider as their own. They are thus societies in their own right. Some Such society may extend beyond the boundaries of nation-states. Example, the Borana Oromo inhabit in both Ethiopia and Kenya.





which began in Great Britain during 18th century, gave rise to the emergence of a fourth type of society called the **Industrial Society**. An industrial society is one in which goods are produced by machines powered by fuels instead of by animal and human energy (*Ibid.*). Sociologists also have come up with a fifth emerging type of society called **post-industrial society**. This is a



from the idea associated with the root word of the term culture, “kulture” in German, which refers to “civilization”. Thus, when one is said to be “cultured”, he or she is said to be civilized. For sociologists and anthropologists, “culture includes much more than refinement, taste, sophistication, education and appreciation of the fine arts. Not only college graduates but also all people are ‘cultured’” Kottak (2002: 272).

2. A second commonly used misconception is that which equates “culture” with things which are colorful, customs, cloths, foods, dancing, music, etc. As Kottak (*op. cit* p.525) argues, “... many [people] have come to think of culture in terms of colorful customs, music, dancing and adornments clothing, jewelry and hairstyles.... Taken to an extreme, such images portray culture as recreational and ultimately unserious rather than something that ordinary people live everyday of their lives not just when they have festivals” (*Ibid.* P. 525).

3. A third misconception about what culture is and what it constitutes is that which may be entertained by many common people here in Ethiopia. This misconception is similar to the second one, but it differs from it in that most people here think culture (as conceptualized in its local language for example, *bahil* in Amharic) is that which pertains to unique traditional material objects or non – material things of the past. According to this view, the cultural may not include things (material or non – material), which are modern, more ordinary, day-to – day, life aspects. Here, the simple, ordinary social, economic and other activities, ideas and affairs are regarded as not cultural or somewhat “less cultural” although not clearly stated.

The concept of culture is one of the most widely used notions in sociology. It refers to the whole ways of life of the members of a society. It includes what they dress, their marriage customs and family life, art, and patterns of work, religious ceremonies, leisure pursuits, and so forth. It also includes the material goods they produce:





material culture consists of any non-physical aspects like language, belief, ideas, knowledge, attitude, values, etc.

3. *Culture is explicit and implicit.* It is explicit when we consider those actions which can be explained and described easily by those who perform them. It is implicit when we consider those things we do, but are unable to explain them, yet we believe them to be so.
4. *Culture is ideal and manifest (actual):* Ideal culture involves the way people ought to behave or what they ought to do. Manifest culture involves what people actually do.
5. *Culture is stable and yet changing:* Culture is stable when we consider what people hold valuable and are handing over to the next generation in order to maintain their norms and values. However, when culture comes into contact with other cultures, it can change. However, culture changes not only because of direct or indirect contact between cultures, but

also through innovation and adaptation to new circumstances.

6. *Culture is shared and learned:* Culture is the public



something else rather than themselves. Symbolic thought is unique and crucial to humans and to culture. It is the human ability to give a thing or event an arbitrary meaning and grasp and appreciate that meaning. There is no obvious natural or necessary connection between a symbol and what it symbolizes (Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Macionis, 1997).



**Box 2.1. Basic features of culture**

- *Culture is organic and supraorganic*
- *Culture is implicit and explicit*
- *Culture is stable and changing*
- *Culture is overt and covert*
- *Culture is learned and shared*
- *Culture is symbolic*
- *Culture is ideal and manifest*

**2.2.3. Elements of Culture**

Culture includes within itself elements that make up the essence of a society or a social group. The major ones include: Symbols, values, norms, and language (See *Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Calhoun et al. 1994*).

***Symbols***

Symbols are the central components of culture. Symbols refer to anything to which people attach





desires. For example, dislike for killing people, concepts and practices of disease management, cleanliness, personal hygiene, cosmetics, incest taboo, etc.

### **Norms**

Norms are also essential elements of culture. They are implicit principles for social life, relationship and interaction. Norms are detailed and specific rules for specific situations. They tell us how to do something, what to do, what not to do, when to do it, why to do it, etc. Norms are derived from values. That means, for every specific norm, there is a general value that determines its content.

Individuals may not act according to the defined values and norms of the group. Therefore, violation of values and norms and deviating from the standard values and norms are often common. Social norms may be divided into two. These are **mores** and **folkways**

**Mores:** Are important and stronger social norms for existence, safety, well-being and continuity of the society or the group or society. Violation of, and



deviation from these kinds of norms, may result in serious reactions from the groups. The strongest norms are regarded as the formal **laws** of a society or a group. Formal laws are written and codified social norms. The other kinds of mores are called conventions. Conventions are established rules governing behavior; they are generally accepted ideals by the society. Conventions may also be regarded as written and signed agreements between nations to govern the behaviors of individuals, groups and nations.

**Folkways:** Are the ways of life developed by a group of people. They are detailed and minor instructions, traditions or rules for day-to-day life that help us function effectively and smoothly as members of a group. Here, violating such kinds of norms may not result in a serious punishment unlike violating mores. They are less morally binding. In other words, folkways are appropriate ways of behaving and doing things. Examples may include table etiquette, dressing rules, walking, talking, etc.

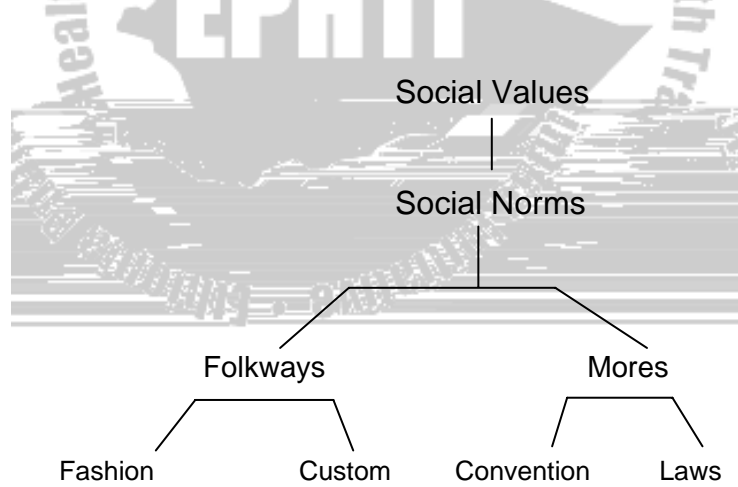
Conformity to folkways usually occurs automatically without any national analysis and is based upon custom passed from generation to generation. They are not enforced by law, but by informal social control. They are not held to be important or obligatory as mores, or moral standards, and their violation is not as such severely sanctioned. Although folkways are less binding, people have to behave according to accepted standards. Some exceptional behaviors are regarded eccentric behaviors.

Folkways are distinguished from laws and mores in that they are designed, maintained and enforced by public sentiment, or custom, whereas laws are institutionalized, designed, maintained and enforced by the political authority of the society. Folkways in turn may be divided into two sub types: **fashion** and **custom**.

**Fashion:** Is a form of behavior, type of folkways that is socially approved at a given time but subject to periodic change. Adherents combine both deviation and conformity to norm of a certain group.

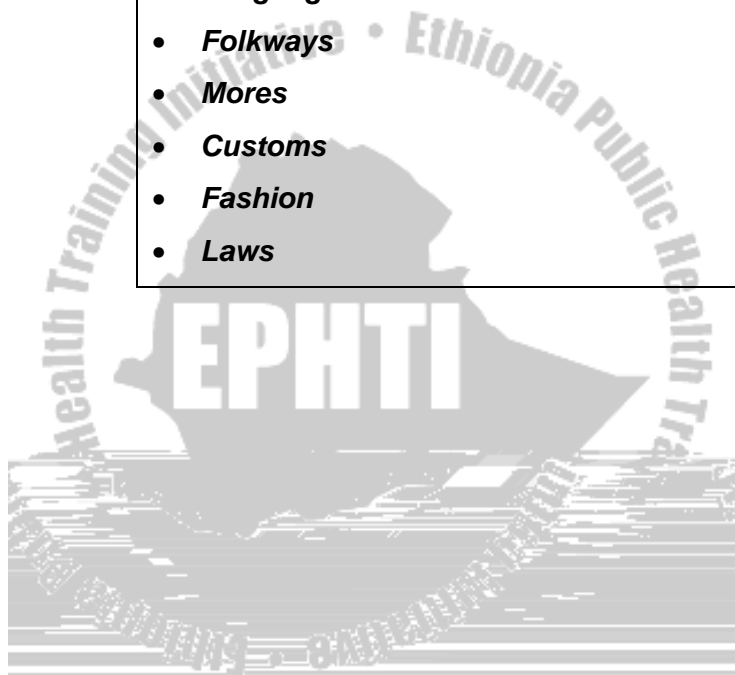
**Custom:** Is a folkway or form of social behavior that, having persisted a long period of time, has become traditional and well established in a society and has received some degree of formal recognition. Custom is a pattern of action shared by most or all members of a society. Habit is a personality trait, where as the custom is a group trait. Fashion and customs can be differentiated in that while custom changes at slower rate, fashion changes at a faster rate.

Figure 2.1 A diagrammatic representation of social norms



**Box 2.2. Elements of culture**

- *Values*
- *Norms*
- *Symbols*
- *Language*
- *Folkways*
- *Mores*
- *Customs*
- *Fashion*
- *Laws*



take the two societies, Ethiopia and India, there are great, sharp cultural diversities between the two



among (between) societies. Various arguments have been provided the variation, including geographical factors, racial determination, demographic factors, span of interest and mere historic chances. Those who argued for racial determination believe that cultural variation is genetically determined. Geographic factors include: climate, altitude, and so forth. Included in demographic factors are changes in population structure, population increase, etc., whereas by span of interest is meant cultures vary as people's interest in life also varies. Cultural variation is due to mere historical chances; a particular group of people may develop a culture as it is exposed to certain historical circumstances and opportunities.

However, no one explanation is sufficient by itself; anthropologists now reject particular deterministic explanation such as those based on race; rather cultural variations are accounted for by more holistic explanations.

### **2.2.5. Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism and Culture Shock**

#### ***Ethnocentrism***

We often tend to judge other cultures by comparison with our own. It is not logically possible and proper to underestimate or overestimate or judge other cultures on the basis of one's cultural standard. Ethnocentrism, in general, is an attitude of taking one's own culture and ways of life as the best and the center of all and on the other hand, regarding other ethnic groups and cultures as inferior, bad, full of errors, etc. It is the tendency to apply one's own cultural values in judging the behavior and beliefs of people raised in other cultures. It is a cultural universal. People everywhere think that familiar explanations, opinion, and customs as true, right, proper and moral. They regard different behavior as strange or savage (Macionis, 1997; Henslin and Nelson, 1995).

#### ***Cultural Relativism***

Every society has its own culture, which is more or less unique. Every culture contains its own unique pattern of behavior which may seem alien to people from other cultural backgrounds. We cannot understand the

practices and beliefs separately from the wider culture of which they are part. A culture has to be studied in terms of its own meanings and values. Cultural relativism describes a situation where there is an attitude of respect for cultural differences rather than condemning other people's culture as uncivilized or backward (Stockard, 1997).

Respect for cultural differences involves:

- Appreciating cultural diversity;
- Accepting and respecting other cultures;
- Trying to understand every culture and its elements in terms of its own context and logic;
- Accepting that each body of custom has inherent dignity and meaning as the way of life of one group which has worked out to its environment, to the biological needs of its members, and to the group relationships;
- Knowing that a person's own culture is only one among many; and
-



Cultural relativism may be regarded as the opposite of ethnocentrism. However, there is some problem with the argument that behavior in a particular culture should not be judged by the standards of another. This is because in its extremeness, it argues that there is no superior, international or universal morality.

To sum up the issues of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, the concepts involve difficult choices, dilemmas and contradictions regarding cultural exchanges and relationships between and within societies. The dilemmas and contradictions become clear when we see that the traditional anthropological position maintains that every cultural beliefs and practice, including for example the ones which are termed as “harmful traditional practices” in Ethiopia, are part and parcel of the general cultural system of a society and therefore they should not be judged and undermined by any outsider. On the other hand, the dilemma is taken to the extreme cultural relativism appears to entail a fallacy, in that it implies that there are no universal cultural or moral standard by which actions

and beliefs have to be judged. Yet still, even cultural anthropologists accept the idea that there are some cultural standards which are universally found everywhere, expressed for example in the world's major religions.

In any case there may be no ready made solutions to this dilemma; however, what we can at present maintain is that cultural diversity has to be respected and yet international standards of justice and human rights have to be taken into account.

**Culture Shock**

Culture shock is the psychological and social maladjustment at micro or macro level that is experienced for the first time when people encounter new cultural elements such as new things, new ideas, new concepts, seemingly strange beliefs and practices. No person is protected from culture shock. However, individuals vary in their capacity to adapt and overcome the influence of culture shock. Highly ethnocentric people are exposed widely to culture shock. On the other hand, cultural relativists may find it easy to adapt

to new situations and overcome culture shock (Henslin and Nelson, 1995).

### **2.2.6. Cultural Universals, Alternatives and Specialties**

#### ***Cultural Universals***

Although there are as many different and unique cultures as societies, there are some cultural practices that are universal. Amid the diversity of human cultural behavior, there are some common features that are found in virtually all societies. **Cultural universality** refers to those practices, beliefs, values, norms, material objects, etc., which are observed across all societies in the world, or across different social groups within a society.

For example, every culture has a grammatically complex language. All societies have some recognized form of family system in which there are values and norms associated with the care of children. The institution of marriage, religious rituals, and property rights are all cultural universals. All societies have some form of incest prohibition. Anthropologist have identified variety

of more cultural universals including the existence of art,





mealtimes	soul concepts
cosmology	games
medicine	status differentiation
courtship	gestures
modesty	trade
dancing	gift giving
mourning	tool making
decorative labor	greetings
music	visiting
division of labor	hair styles
mythology	weaning
dream interpretation	hospitality
numerals	weather control
education	housing
obstetrics	ethics
hygiene	personal names
ethnobotany	incest taboos
population policy	etiquette
inheritance rules	postnatal care

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Source: Scupin, Raymond and Christopher R. DeCorse (1995). *Anthropology, a Global Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

### ***Cultural Alternatives and Specialties***

There are many different options for doing the same thing. For example, care for a patient is a universal aspect of cultures; but the way people care for patients varies. There are many diverse ways of doing the same thing. This is called cultural alternative. In other words, cultural alternatives refer to two or more forms of behavior in a particular society which are acceptable in a given situation. These alternatives represent different reactions to the same situations or different techniques to achieve the same end. Cultural alternatives are (also) the types of choices that allow for differences in ideas, customs and lifestyles. Modern industrialized societies offer far more cultural alternatives than had many societies of the past.

On the other hand, cultural specialties refer to the specific skills, training, knowledge, etc. which is limited to a group or specific members of society. They are those elements of culture which are shared by the members of certain social groups but which are not shared by the total population. Cultural specialties cause

behavioral differences among people as opposed to cultural universals.

### **2.2.7. The Concepts of Culture Lag and Culture Lead**

Culture is dynamic. When culture change occurs, the change is usually not evenly distributed across **material** and **non-material** dimensions of culture. The rate of change is not balanced. Material culture may change at a faster rate than non-material culture. The growth in science and technology in western, industrialized societies for example, does not seem to be matched by the necessary changes and appropriate adjustment of adaptive culture. That is non-material culture changes slowly. This condition is termed as **culture lag**. Associated with the rapid growth in material culture are usually crisis in the realm of amorality, social and cultural dilemmas, which in turn result in various social pathologies such as extreme form of individualism, alienation, the state of normlessness, suicide, etc (Team of Experts, 2000).

On the other hand, in some less developed societies, the change of non-material culture may outpace the material culture. When this occurs, it is called **culture lead**. Due to the effect of globalization and rapid assimilation processes, people in the Third World are accustomed to the ideology and cultures of the Western World, though their material culture is not changing keeping pace with non- material culture.

### **2.2.8. Global Culture and Cultural Imperialism**

Before closing this chapter, it may be important to note few things on the issues of cultural exchange in today's globalizing world. One of the main aspects of globalization is that a relatively uniform world culture is taking shape today in the world. The global culture may entail all speaking the some language, share the same values and norms, and sustain common und of knowledge as of residents of the same community (Kottak 2002). Global culture may also be associated with **cultural imperialism**, the unequal cultural exchange in the global system whereby western material and non-material cultures have come to occupy





state and ethnic group levels. Depending on various criteria, societies may be classified into various categories, such as First World, Second World, Third World and Fourth World Societies (based on economic development and overall socio-economic status); and hunting and gathering, pastoral, agrarian, industrial and post industrial societies (based on temporal succession and major means of livelihood).

The term "culture" refers to the whole ways of life of the members of a society. It includes what they dress; their marriage customs and family life; art and patterns of work; religious ceremonies; leisure pursuits and so forth. Culture has various dimensions such as material and non-material, implicit and explicit, organic and supra organic, ideal and actual, dynamic and static and overt and covert. The essential elements of culture include symbols, language, values and norms. Other important aspects of culture such as culture variability; ethnocentrism, cultural relativism and culture shock; cultural universals, alternatives and specialties; and culture lag and lead are discussed.

## Review Questions

1. Define the term "society".
2. "In a broader perspective, the people of the planet earth maybe regarded as a society." Explain.
3. Mention the criteria for classifying societies into different categories. Where would you put Ethiopia as a society according to both criteria? Why?
4. Define the term "culture".
5. List and discuss the elements of culture.
6. Discuss the main characteristics of culture.
7. Why do cultures vary between societies?
8. What are subcultures? How are sub-cultures created? Think of a certain health service rendering



### 3.1. The Concept of Socialization: Definition and Necessity

In any society there are socially recognized ways in which the norms and values of the society are inculcated in the human infant who comes into this world as a biological organism with animalistic needs or impulses. Individuals learn group-defined ways of acting and behaving, and what they socially learn becomes part of their personality.

**Socialization** is a process of making somebody social and fully human. Or more appropriately, it is a process whereby individual persons learn and are trained in the basic norms, values, beliefs, skills, attitudes, way of doing and acting as appropriate to a specific social group or society.

It is an on-going, never ending process- from cradle to the grave. That means an individual person passes thorough various stages of socialization, from birth to death. Thus, we need socialization as infants,

preschool children, schoolboys/girls, pubescents, adolescents, adults and older persons.

From the point of view of individual persons, especially a newly born baby, socialization is a process whereby a biological being or organism is changed into a social being. In terms of the group, society or any professional organizations, socialization is a process whereby the organizations', social groups' and society's structure and well-being are kept and sustained. It is the process whereby the culture, skills, norms, traditions, customs, etc., are transmitted from generation to generation - or from one society to another.

Socialization may be formal or informal. It becomes formal when it is conducted by formally organized social groups and institutions, like schools, religious centers, mass media universities, work places, military training centers, internships, etc. It is informal when it is carried out through the informal social interactions and relationships at micro-levels, at interpersonal and small social group levels. The most important socialization for us is that we get through informal agents like family,

parents, neighborhood and peer group influences. It has a very powerful influence, whether negative or positive, in our lives.

The process of socialization, whether it is formal or informal, is vitally important to both individuals and society. Without some kind of socialization, society would cease to exist. Socialization, thus, can be labeled as the way by which culture is transmitted and individuals are fitted into the society's organized way of life.

### **3.2. The Goals of Socialization**

In terms of individual persons, the goal of socialization is to equip him or her with the basic values, norms, skills, etc, so that they will behave and act properly in the social group to which they belong. Socialization has also the following specific goals (Broom and Slezni, 1973):

- To inculcate basic disciplines by restraining a child or even an adult from immediate gratification; a child who is toilet-trained will delay

relieving himself/ herself until the proper environment is created.

- To instill aspirations;
- To teach social roles;
- To teach skills;
- To teach conformity to norms; and
- To create acceptable and constructive personal identities.

Despite the inculcation of values and norms is significant in the process of social integration, we need to also note that social values are not equally absorbed by members of a society or group. The integrative function of socialization is also not equally beneficial to all people. There is always the question of whose values have to be inculcated? This question particularly becomes crucial in an increasingly globalizing society. Hence, the ideological role of socialization with the issues of differential power, control, domination and conflict become important.



### 3.3. Human Biological Bases of, and Capacity for, Socialization

From among the animal kingdom, humans are the only ones who are capable of socialization because they are endowed with the necessary biological bases that are lacking in other animals. The following are the key biological characteristics of human beings on which socialization is based: Absence of instincts, social contact needs, longer period of childhood dependence, capacity to learn and language (Broom and Slezni, 1973; Henslin and Nelson, 1995)

**Absence of Instincts:** The term "instinct" in its current social science usage refers to the complex behavior patterns for which some animal species are biologically programmed. For example, nest-building among birds is an instinct. But humans have no comparable behavior patterns which are biologically fixed, although they have innumerable built-in physiological reflexes. Humans have biological drives or impulses such as hunger, thirst, sex, etc, rather than instincts. This absence of instincts makes humans dependent on social direction and their

behaviors are amenable to such direction. The open-endedness of humans is thus the biological ground for social conformity.

**Social Contact Needs:** Humans need sustained social contacts. Studies conducted on primates and human infants revealed that lack of body stimulation and contact in infancy appear to inhibit and prevent the development of higher learning functions. Satisfaction of the social contact and initiations needs in humans is a strong biological imperative.

**Longer Period of Childhood Dependence:** A third biological condition that makes extensive socialization essential for humans is that the human infant need much longer period of physical dependence and sexual immaturity than other animals. The need to acquire the techniques and skills of social living further prolongs the dependence. Such longer period of dependence, during which the child is cared for and controlled by others, results in an intense emotional dependence that remains throughout life.

**Capacity to Learn:** A high level of intelligence is an innate human biological potential. Hence, humans are highly educable; they can learn much more than other animals and can continue to learn more over a longer period of time.

**Language:** Man's ability to learn is a function of his capacity for language. Other animals may have some degree of intelligence but only humans have reasoning capacity because they have language. Language expresses and arouses emotion; conveys feelings, values and knowledge. Whether as vehicle for knowledge or for attitude, language is the key factor in the creation of human society. Symbolic communication, which is possessed only by humans, makes language possible. Humans innately possess the potential and capacity to create culture and to be guided by cultural

**Box 3.1. The five human biological bases of socialization**

- *Absence of instinct*
- *Social contact needs*
- *Capacity to learn and teachability*
- *Capacity for language*
- *Longer period of childhood dependence*

### **3.4. Modes of Social Learning**

What are the mechanisms by which socialization is accomplished? Fuller answer is not yet found to this question. Sociologists have, however, identified four modes of social learning. These are: conditioning, identity taking, modeling-after and problem solving

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remains constant while the stimuli vary, as in Pavlovian experiment. In contrast, in **operant** or **instrumental**



skills gradually develop, children begin to learn that they are being called boys or girls, accept what others label, learn by observation, and report what boys and girls do and behave accordingly.

**Modeling After:** Children learn to model their behavior after someone who is an admired, loved or feared figure. This is considered as a typical stage in personality formation and in the development of personal autonomy and social involvement. Through modeling after someone, our behavior acquires meaning and coherence.

**Problem Solving:** The above three mechanisms of social learning are ways in which individuals internalize the values and norms of society. They may be termed as modes of internalization. However, social learning transcends beyond simply internalizing values and norms. It also includes learning to involve in cooperative and conflict-ridden activities, to cope with new situations and to achieve one's goals. Problem solving mode of social learning is essential particularly in societies where complexity and fluidity dominate the social world. Problem solving is not to be understood as a kind of

mathematical puzzle solving, but it is one which is applied to a problematic social situation in which individuals find themselves uncomfortable and need a context-based response.

While each mode of social learning is important, it is to be noted that each has its own limitation. No single mode of social learning thus fully accounts for socialization.

### 3.5. Patterns of Socialization

There are two broadly classified patterns of socialization. These are: **Repressive** and **participatory** socialization. Repressive socialization is oriented towards gaining obedience, while participatory socialization is oriented towards gaining the participation of the child. Punishment of wrong behavior and rewarding and reinforcing good behavior are involved in the two kinds of socialization, respectively. The following is a tabular representation of the two modes of socialization.

**Table 3.1: Two modes of socialization, adapted from Broom and Selznick (1973)**

<i>Repressive Socialization</i>	<i>Participatory Socialization</i>
• Punishing wrong behavior	• Rewarding good behavior
• Material rewards and punishment	• Symbolic rewards and punishment
• Obedience of child	• Autonomy of child
• Non-verbal communication	• Verbal communication
• Communication as command	• Communication as interaction
• Parent-centered socialization	• Child-centered socialization
• Child's discernment of parents' wishes	• Parents' discernment of child's needs
• Family as significant other	• Family as generalized other

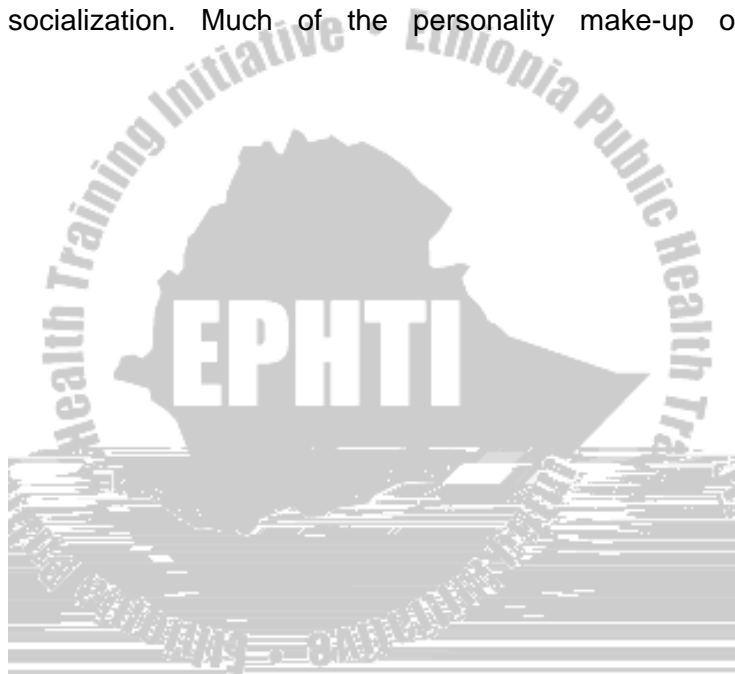
### 3.6. Major Types of Socialization

There are different types of socialization; the major ones include: **primary** or



### 3.6.1. Primary or Childhood Socialization

This is also called **basic** or **early** socialization. The terms "primary", "basic" or "early" all signify the overriding importance of the childhood period for socialization. Much of the personality make-up of



### 3.6.2. Secondary or Adult Socialization

While socialization is an overbidding issue for children and adolescents, it is a never-ending process that continues through out life. Secondary or adult socialization is necessitated when individual take up new roles, reorienting themselves according to their changes social statuses and roles, as in starting marital life. The socialization process at this stage may sometimes be intense. For example, fresh college graduates entering the world of work to start their first jobs, there are quite many new roles to be mastered. Intense adult socialization may also occur among immigrants. When they go to other countries, they may need to learn the language, values, norms, and a host of other custom and folkways, coupled with experiencing

### 3.6.3. Re-socialization and De-socialization

In the lives of individuals, as they pass through different stages and life experiences, there is the need for re-socialization and de-socialization. Re-socialization means the adoption by adults of radically different norms and lifeways that are more or less completely dissimilar to the previous norms and values. Re-socialization signifies the rapid and more basic changes in the adult life. The change may demand abandonment of one lifeway with a new one, which is completely different from, and also incompatible with, the former. This quite so often happens as adult life in modern societies demands sharp transitions and changes.

De-socialization typically precedes re-socialization. De-socialization refers to stripping individuals of their former life styles, beliefs, values and attitudes so that they may take up other partially or totally new life styles, attitudes and values. The individuals have to abandon their former values and take up new ones in order to become part of the new social group.

De-socialization and re-socialization often take place in what is called **total institutions**, which are an all-encompassing and often isolated from the community. They demand a thorough de-socialization of the new entrants before they assume full-fledged membership. Total institutions include: mental hospitals, prisons, religious denominations and some other political groups, and military units. In each case, persons joining the new setting have first to be de-socialized, before they are re-socialized.

Re-socialization may also mean socializing individuals again into their former values and norms, after they rejoin their former ways of life, spending a relatively longer period of time in total institutions. This is because they might have forgotten most of the basic values and skills of the former group or society. This kind of re-socialization may also be regarded as reintegration, helping the ex-community members renew their memories of their former lifeways, skills, knowledge, etc.

### **3.6.4. Anticipatory Socialization**

Anticipatory socialization refers to the process of adjustment and adaptation in which individuals try to learn and internalize the roles, values, attitudes and skills of a social status or occupation for which they are likely recruits in the future. They do this in anticipating the actual forthcoming socialization. It involves a kind of rehearsal and preparations in advance to have a feel of what the new role would look like. However, anticipatory socialization may not be adequate when the nature and scope of life transition is complex. It may be difficult to fully anticipate what will happen.

### **3.6.5. Reverse Socialization**

Reverse socialization refers to the process of socialization whereby the dominant socializing persons, such as parents, happen to be in need of being socialized themselves by those whom they socialize, such as children. This idea seems to be associated with the fact that socialization is a two-way process. It involves the influences and pressures from the

socializees that directly or indirectly induce change the attitudes and behaviors of the socializers themselves. In reverse socialization, children, for example, may happen to socialize their parents in some roles, skills, and attitudes which the latter lack.

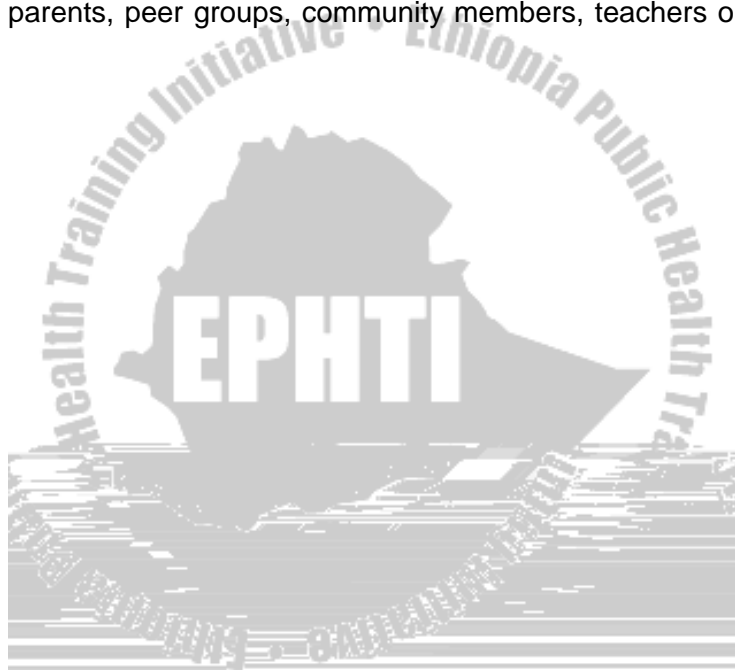
**Box 3.2. Major types of socialization**

- *Primary or childhood socialization*
- *Secondary or adult socialization*
- *Re-socialization*
- *De-socialization*
- *Anticipatory socialization*
- *Reverse socialization*

### **3.7. Agents and Components of Socialization**

Agents of socialization are the different groups of people and institutional arrangements which are responsible for training new members of society. Some of them could be formal, while others are informal. They help individual members get into the overall activities of their society.

There are three components to socialization process. There is the socializee who could be either a newborn child, a recruit to the army or the police force or a freshman in a college or an intern in medical service. Then again there are the socializers who may be parents, peer groups, community members, teachers or



and kindergarten, as well as primary and secondary schools and universities. It seems that these various agents of socialization have partially taken over the function of the parents, particularly in modern societies, where women are increasingly leaving their traditional home-based responsibilities by engaging in employment outside home. The school represents a formal and conscious effort by a society to socialize its young.

Other than parents and schools, peer groups play very significant roles in the socialization process. Sometimes, the influence of the peer group, be it negative or positive, can be as powerful as that of parents. The peer group may transmit prevailing societal values or develop new and distinct cultures of its own with peculiar values.

The mass media such as television, radio, movies, videos, tapes, books, magazines and newspapers are also important agents of socialization. The most crucial effect on children comes from television, as studies show. The effects are both negative and positive. Negative impact seem to be greater than parents and other concerned bodies worry about the way television



is socializing children. For example, studies show that watching violence on television can encourage aggressive behavior in children

### **3.8. Multiple and Contradictory Influences of Socialization**

So far, the picture of socialization presented may seem to be biased towards the structural functionalist view of society and socialization. Hence, it would be useful to add few ideas that may help balance the picture. In a critical conceptualization of socialization, the contradictory and ambiguous sources and influences of socialization need to be highlighted.

If we take a good example interesting for health science students, it would be important in this regard. A case in point could be alcohol and tobacco consumption. Evidences show that the consumption of tobacco and alcohol is rapidly increasing in the Third world. There are underlying and contradictory processes of socialization behind this phenomenon. The conflicting influences arise when on the one hand, families, schools, and

medical institutions warn youngsters not to consume these products; and on the other hand, the global companies producing these products are powerfully waging the war of getting the products to the youth, through the lure of television advertisement.

This example shows us that often conflicting, competing messages pass from the various sources of socialization. The various agents of socialization are also not accorded balanced share of power, control and domination. The international companies, who forcefully promote the culture of consumerism through the aid of the powerful global media, tend to play dominating roles in influencing the attitudes and lifestyles of youngsters  
*(Personal communications. Dr Teketel Abebe, Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)*

### **3.9. Chapter Summary**

Socialization is a life long, never ending process whereby individuals are trained and fitted into the normal functioning of their societies and groups. Only





## Review Questions

1. Define the term "socialization".
2. Why are humans biologically capable of socialization?
3. Mention and discuss the goals of socialization.
4. Discuss the mechanism by which social learning in humans takes place.
5. Compare and contrast the two modes of socialization.
6. Mention and discuss the major and minor types of socialization.
7. "A greater proportion of an individual's personality is a reflection of the type of socialization process he or she has gone through during primary socialization." Explain.
8. "Without socialization a person is a mere biological being." Discuss.
9. Identify the aspects of your personality which you regard as the results of parent socialization, peer influences and the mass media,
10. Discuss the negative and positive effects of television as agent of socialization in your life.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

#### Learning Objectives

After learning this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe the meaning of social organization;
- Understand that humans are by nature social animals and apart from sustained social relationship, humans would not enjoy life in isolation;
- Appreciate the influence of group life on individual behavior, and *vice versa*; and the role of primary social groups in shaping the personality, attitude, lifestyle and mentality of individuals;
- Describe the meaning social interaction and social relationship;
- Identify the basic symbolic interactionist perspective of social interaction in everyday life;
- Define the concepts of social status and social roles; and understand the fact that individuals interact within the framework of status and role

- Define the concept of social institution; and
- Describe the meaning and types of social control.

#### 4.1. The Concept of Social Organization

The health science student should be introduced to the idea of how we as social beings organize ourselves and how individual persons, communities and societies are related to one another. Human beings are social animals by nature and whatever we do or say are related to social environment. Our lives as human beings have their meanings in organized relationships. Whether we eat, drink, work, play, worship, recreate or learn, we do it in social group context. No one enjoys alone outside organized network of social interaction and relationships. Although we have the capacity for privacy, no one can enjoy him / herself for a sustained period of time, without inflicting upon oneself adverse effects

By ***social organization***, we refer to the pattern of individual and group relations. The term "organization" signifies technical arrangement of parts in a whole, and

the term "social", indicates the fact that individual and group relations are the outcomes of social processes (Broom and Slezinky, 1973). Thus, one of sociology's main concerns is to study and analyze the behavior of human society as it appears in its structured and organized ways and relationships. Specifically, sociologists





## **4.2. Social Groups**

In our day-to-day life and social activities, we interact with each other, belonging to a group of some kind. The study of group is central to any sociological investigation.

### **4.2.1. Definition of a Social Group**

The term group has a special meaning in sociology because it represents a concept that is central to any sociological analysis. Quite several definitions have been given to the term group by different sociologists. Generally, a social group is defined as the collectivity or set of people who involve in more or less permanent or enduring social interactions and relationships. Members of a social group have common basis for interaction and shared characteristics, a feeling of identity or belongingness, shared psychology or consciousness and a definite set of norms to govern the behaviors of the individual participant in the group

#### 4.2.2. Basic Features of a Social Group

In their sociological analysis of the group behavior of human society, sociologists have identified some essential elements of a social group. For a set or collectivity of people to be a social group, it has to have the following essential traits or features (Calhoun *et al*, 1994)

1. Members of the group continue to interact with one another;
2. Membership requires living by norms that are special to the group;
3. Members view each other as part of the group; members feel some sense of identification with the group and with one another; and there is a social boundary between members and non-members;
4. Members are functionally integrated through role and status relationship in the group structure; and
5. Others see members as group.

Social interaction among the members is relatively permanent; it is not causal. Common interests should characterize as a basis for interaction. There are shared

values, beliefs and lifestyles. The emotional, shared consciousness is also important. The feeling of belongingness is very important. Social norms and values govern behavior of group members.

All of the following are examples of social groups, from the smallest possible level to the largest possible. A dyad (made up of two persons like fiancés, husband and wife), a family, a group of students in a dormitory, peer group, a friendship, an ethnic group, a community, a nation, a continent, a university, an organization, etc.

#### **4.2.3. Classification of Groups**

Sociologists have classified groups into two basic classifications, namely, **primary** and **secondary** groups.

### ***Primary Groups and Their Main Features***

Charles H. Cooley was the first sociologist to use the term primary groups to describe such groups as family, neighborhood and children's play groups. Such groups were the "nursery of human nature" where the essential sentiment of human group loyalty and concern for others could be learned. Primary groups are distinguished by some of the following characteristics:

- There is face-to-face interaction among members.
- There is high sentiment or loyalty.
- Identification (group identity) and close cooperation among members
- There is a high level of emotional, spiritual satisfaction to be derived from involvement in primary social groups.
- Concern for friendly relations as an end in themselves, not as a means to an end.
- Primary groups are often small in size.
- Primary group gives its members (individuals) their "first acquaintance with humanity".

- Primary groups, for a child, are a school for learning the ways of human interaction and the give and take of working and playing together.

### ***Secondary Groups and Their Main Features***

Secondary groups are the more formal types of groups to which peoples belong. To start with clearly definitive examples, the Federal Army, Lion's Club, Ethiopian Commercial Bank, etc, are secondary groups. As organizations, secondary groups do not give people the feeling of close identity that primary groups give. Considerable effort must be devoted to making people proud of the corporation for which they work, and this type of pride, if it is achieved at all, is not primary group sentiment. One can still be lost in the great organization; there is not the same sense of psychological security.

Main features (traits) of secondary social groups include:

- There is little or no emotional involvement.
- Members are more competitive than cooperative.
- Members are less intimate.
- Group identity is less relevant.

- Economic efficiency is given higher emphasis than psychological identity.
- The group is mainly a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
- Membership is unlimited.

Some critical observations must be made concerning the classification of groups.

- i) Primary and secondary groups are ideal types, i.e. types represented as opposite poles for the sake of analysis. In concrete life situations, most relations are not purely primary or secondary, but come some where between, examples: school, church, etc.
- ii) A second reservation about primary-secondary group classification is that primary groups may be formed within secondary groups.

In other words, the classification of social groups into primary and secondary should not be taken as a sort of dichotomy. It should rather be considered as a continuum, i.e. at the two extreme ends, there may be



grouping a real social group can emerge. Examples of an aggregate include: two or more people in a taxi, bus, air plane, an elevator, a busy city street, in a cafeteria, a stadium, in a market, in a hospital ward, etc.

Anonymity in the midst of crowd behavior usually characterizes aggregates. Such condition may lead to the problem of sense of alienation, dehumanization, sense of being lost, depression, social stress and other psychosocial problems. Suicide is very common in urban than rural areas and mental illness is more increased in societies characterized by anonymity, individualism, and heterogeneity.

***Categories***

This is a quasi-group which consists of a plurality or collectively of people who are physically dispersed, but who share common traits and interests. It refers to a social class; or a



may never know each other. However, gradually, a





### **4.3. Social Interaction and Social Relationship**

To understand social organizations in a society, sociologists study social structures and the function of social events and processes. This involves studying social interaction and relationships at broader (macro) and micro levels. Social interaction and relationship may be studied as they occur between the whole societies linked in the world system down to those between two individuals. Here our focus is on social interaction and relationship in the everyday life of individuals.

Individuals are the main components of society; they make up the building blocks; as,65 Tw8uals.d

pattern. In other words, the actions of individuals are not haphazard ones; they take place in patterned relationships.

**Social relationship** refers to any routinized, enduring



**status.** They are acquired by birth. For example, being a male or female, boy or girl, black or white person, son or



The most dominant of all is called a **salient status**. It is that which defines a person's position in most cases at most occasions (Calhoun *et al.*, 1994; Rosenberg, 1987; Stockard, 1997).

### ***The Concept of Social Roles***

**Social roles** are the expectations, duties, responsibilities, obligations, etc, which are associated with a given social status. Every person/ group of persons is/ are expected to behave, act and demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitude that are fitting to the given status or statuses. Every person is expected to play two or more roles.

Multiple statuses are associated with multiple roles. The different roles associated with a single status are called **role set**. Sometimes, there are role conflicts, meaning the clashing of one role with the other. These role conflicts may be **inter-role**, i.e. conflict between two or more roles. There are also **intra-role** conflicts, i.e. conflicts that occur when a person feels strains and inadequacies in accomplishing a certain role, or when there is a gap between what a person does and what a







touched by, others. Anthropological research findings show that the use of personal space varies from culture to culture; four different distance zones are identified, for example, as used in North America (*Ibid*). These are:

- I. **Intimate Distance** (50 centimeter from our bodies; reserved for lovemaking, wrestling, comforting, protecting, etc.);
- II. **Personal Distance** (extends from 50 centimeter to 120 centimeter surrounding our bodies; these spaces are reserved for friends, acquaintances and conversations);
- III. **Social Distance** (extends from 120 centimeter to 3.6 meters for impersonal or formal relationships; e.g., for job interviews); and
- IV. **Public Distance** (this zone extends from 3.6 meters; it marks a more formal relationship. This is used to separate dignitaries and public speakers from the general public.)

- **Touching:** Each society has rules about touching in social interaction. Frequency of touching and the meaning people attach to it vary between and within cultures. However, in impersonal social interactions, higher status individuals are more likely to touch those of lower status; e.g. teacher his/ her students; a boss his secretary, etc.
2. **Dramaturgy:** Symbolic interactionists use the term “dramaturgy” to refer to the way individuals present themselves in everyday life. The term was coined by sociologist Erving Goffman (1922 – 1982) to refer to dramaturgical analysis of how people act and behave in social situations. Thus, social life is likened to a drama or stage. Individuals are born into the stage of everyday life. Our everyday social life consists of playing our assigned roles. Every person learns how to perform in the stage. Our everyday life is filled with stages where we perform; each person is expected to play his/ her drama taking many roles; e.g. a student, a wife, a mother, a daughter, a worker, etc. The actions and roles played on the stage are called **role performances** (*ibid.*).

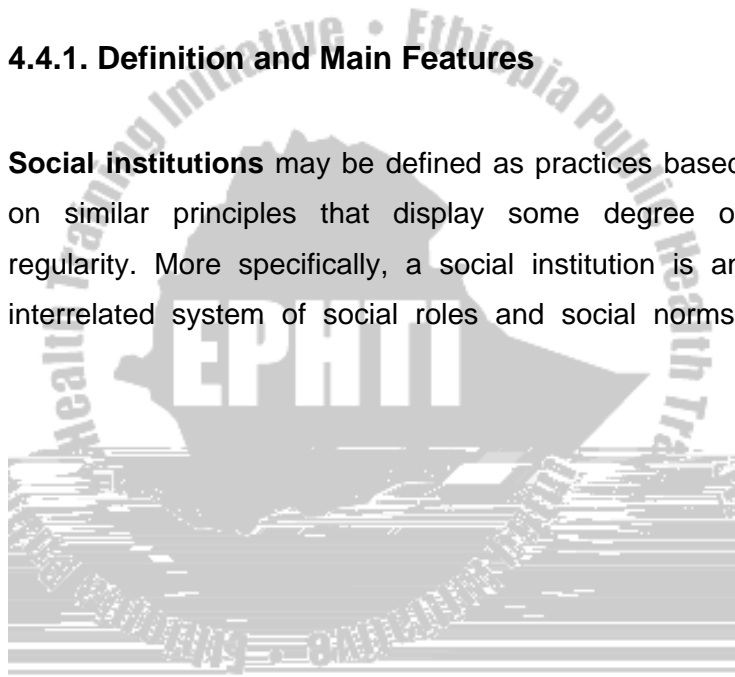


definitions we learn from our cultures form the basis of not only what we do, but also what we perceive, feel or think.

## 4.4. Social Institutions

### 4.4.1. Definition and Main Features

**Social institutions** may be defined as practices based on similar principles that display some degree of regularity. More specifically, a social institution is an interrelated system of social roles and social norms



society. A society is functionally integrated and held together by social institutions.

Social institutions are universal. They vary from time to time and across cultures, in terms of complexity, specialization, scope, formality and organization. But their basic nature and purpose are similar everywhere. These features are particularly true regarding the five major social institutions discussed below. Social institutions are resistant to change; they tend to persist. However, once a change occurs in particular social institution, it tends to affect the other institutions as well.

#### **4.4.2. Major Types and Functions of Social Institutions**

There are many principles around which institutions are organized. The five social institutions of major significance are:

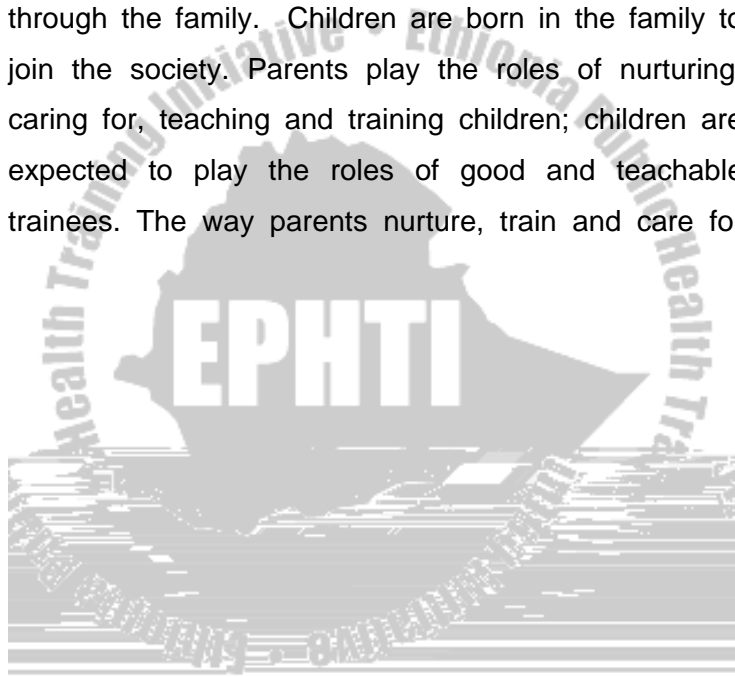
1. Economic institutions: those that deal with economic and property relations;

2. Polity and law: Those that are concerned with social control with politics and law government, the police, court, etc;
3. Religious institutions: Those concerned with the supernatural magic and religion;
4. Family: those based on principles of kinship, meaning, social relations created by descent and marriage; and
5. Educational institutions: those that deal with the need for training individuals in the roles, values, skills, knowledge, attitudes etc which are associated with being a citizen and a worker.

Each institution performs two types of social function. These are: (a) **primary functions**, which are also called manifest, explicit, or direct functions; and (b) **secondary functions**, which are also called indirect, hidden, or latent functions. Through these functions, social institutions fulfill important needs in the society. The primary functions of the five major social institutions are as follows.

## 1. The Family

The family is the most important social unit in any society. It is the building block of any society. The family fulfills two basic functions. These are reproduction and socialization. Society reproduces or recreates itself through the family. Children are born in the family to join the society. Parents play the roles of nurturing, caring for, teaching and training children; children are expected to play the roles of good and teachable trainees. The way parents nurture, train and care for recreates itselfsothrough t







appropriately. They also provide a sense of social solidarity among members of society.

#### **4. Political Institution (Government and Law)**

These social institutions are responsible for protecting the society from internal disorder, crime and chaos; as well as from external threats and invasion. They are responsible for maintaining peace and order at micro and macro levels; enforcing social control; and maintaining the welfare and well-being of society.

#### **5. Educational Institution**

This social institution is responsible for providing training for the members of society. It serves as center of knowledge production, exchange, and distribution. Generally, educational institutions are responsible for the vertical and horizontal transmission of material and non-material cultures. Vertical transmission means over time from one generation to another generation; where as horizontal transmission means over geographical

being good citizens and workers, holding various occupations.

Before ending this section it is important to note that although the foregoing way of presenting the nature and function of social institutions is often common in some of standard text books in introductory sociology, we also need to view them in a critical and conflict theory approach. From such perspectives, social institutions may be functional for some and dysfunctional (meaning positively harmful and damaging) for other individuals and groups in a society. This is partly because they often exist and operate in the context of class division and social stratification, unequal access to power and resources. From this point of view, social institutions may not be functional to all members of society equally. They may exist to promote the interests and privileges of some sections of society (*Personal communication: Dr Teketel Abebe, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University*).

**Box 4.1. Major social institutions with primary functions**

***The family:*** procreation and socialization of children

***Economic institution:*** organizing production, exchange and consumption of goods and services

***Political Institution:*** Maintaining peace and order in society

***Educational institution:*** centers of knowledge creation and transmission; transmission of culture from generation to generation

***Religious institution:*** Meeting spiritual needs; serving as source of explanatory authority on difficult questions facing human life.

## **4.5. The Concept of Social Control**

### **4.5.1. Definition and Necessity**

In any human society, there are deviations from the accepted norms of a society or group. This movement away from the accepted social standards is called **social deviance**. Each society or group expects and

attempts to ensure conformity of its members to its norms. Those members of a society or a group who abide by the rules and norms of the society (or the group) are called **conformists**, while those who don't are called **non-conformists**. A society or a group applies some formal and informal mechanisms to achieve conformity. Individuals may not act according to the defined values and norms of the group. Therefore violation of values and norms and deviating from the standard values and norms are often common.

**Social control** is thus simply defined as all the mechanisms and processes employed by a society to ensure conformity. In other words, social control is the use of cultural or social means by which the behavior of individuals is influenced or controlled.

#### 4.5.2. Types of Social Control

There are two major types of social control mechanisms. These are: negative and positive social control mechanisms.

**Negative Social Control:** This involves punishment or regulating behavior of deviants. A deviant is a person whose views and actions are different in moral or social standards from what is considered normal or acceptable in the context of a certain social group. This social control may be at micro/ informal level and macro/ formal levels. Micro/ informal level social control occurs at the level of small groups such as peer groups, family, and interpersonal relationships. Examples of negative social control at micro levels include: simple gossip or backbiting, a simple frowning, reprimanding, pinching, beating, ridiculing, scolding, ostracizing, etc. The punishments can be in the psychological, social or physical/ material forms. Punishments at macro or formal level include: fining, firing, demotion, imprisonment, banishment or excommunication, capital punishment and so on.

**Positive Social Control:** These mechanisms involve rewarding and encouraging those who abide by the norms. It involves rewarding the model behavior. The informal psychosocial reward mechanisms include simple smiles, saying encouraging word, shaking hands, thanking, showing appreciation, etc. Formal positive social control mechanism may include giving awards, promoting to a higher level of status, etc.

#### 4.6. Chapter Summary

Social organization refers to the way people are socially grouped in an enduring network of social interaction and relationship. The appropriate living and working environment of a person is group life. As a ship does not function outside water, a human being as a social animal does not live for any meaningful sustained period of time in isolation from social group context. Whatever we do, say, behave, or act gets its right meaning in the context of a social group.

The social organizational life of people may be explained in terms of social groups, aggregates, categories, etc. The organic life of society is cemented or glued together by forces of social interaction and relationship. The nature and dynamic of social interaction in our everyday lives are discussed. Key symbolic interactionist concepts and perspectives such as dramaturgy, stereotypes in everyday interaction, ethnomethodology and the social construction of reality are also discussed.

Social status locates individuals and groups in the social structure, of which some locations are defined by birth and others are obtained by choice, efforts and competitions. Statuses are associated with roles, which may be ideal or actual. There are usually tensions and clashes between ideal and actual roles. When such tensions take place within one role it is intra-role conflict or role strain, and when it occurs between the different roles of a person, it is inter-role conflict.

Social institutions may be defined as practices based on similar principles that display some degree of regularity. More specifically, a social institution is an interrelated system of social roles and social norms, organized around the satisfaction of an important social need or social function.

Social control is thus simply defined as all the mechanisms and processes employed by a society to ensure conformity. In other words, social control is any cultural or social means by which restraints are imposed upon individual behavior and by which people are initiated to follow the traditions and patterns of behavior accepted by society. It is, simply, a means by which conformists are rewarded and non-conformists are punished.



## Review Questions

1. Explain the term *social organization* using your own words
2. What is *social relationship*?
3. Explain the following statement: "No one enjoys aloneness."
4. Discuss the difference between social groups and quasi-social groups.
5. Identify the elements of social group influence that you think have become part of your personality, life style, life choices and goals. Which of your life philosophies, likes and dislikes are *not the products of social influence, i.e., that are just your own idiosyncrasies?*

7. Differentiate between intra-social and inter-social role, conflicts. Explain cases of, if any, inter-social



## CHAPTER FIVE

# SOCIAL PROCESSES

### Learning Objectives

Having completed this chapter, the students will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of social processes and their analogy with biological processes;
- Describe the modes of social processes, such as competition, conflict, cooperation, assimilation and accommodation;
- Understand the concept of social stratification, its roots, forms and consequences.
- Define the concept of social mobility, and differentiate between the various forms of mobility;
- Describe the concept of social change, its

## 5.1. The Concept of Social Processes

As members of a society or different societies interact with each other, different social processes take place. As there are processes in the natural world, social processes are bound to take place in the organized life of society. In the social system, these social processes are necessary for the very life, existence and smooth functioning of the system. Sociologists are interested in studying and analyzing these repetitive forms or patterns of behaviors, actions, and reactions.

**Social processes** are certain repetitive, continuous forms of patterns in the social systems that occur as individuals, groups, societies, or countries interact with each other. They are interaction patterns or modes, among members (individual) within a society or a group involving particular repetitive features, occurring both at micro and macro levels. They help us interpret and understand our social behavior.

## 5.2. Modes of Social Processes

Social processes may be manifested in a number of ways. There are generally five modes of social processes. These are competition, conflict, cooperation, accommodation and assimilation. These are universal modes; they take place at micro and macro levels. One mode of social process may balance another; e.g., competition by cooperation. One may also yield another- they take place in an unending cycle. For example, competition may yield conflict.

### 5.2.1. Competition

Competition as a social process seems to be more pronounced than others. It is real in our day-to-day interpersonal encounters, as well as in the global situations. Competition is the process where by individuals, groups, societies, and countries make active efforts to win towards getting their share of the limited resources. It is an impersonal attempt to gain scarce and valued resources of wealth, land, health care services, etc. As a result of competition, stratification,

physical separation and so on may happen in a given society. Competition involves struggle, efforts, decisions, actions, etc., to survive. Competition is balanced by cooperation.

### **5.2.2. Cooperation**

Cooperation is a social process whereby people join hands towards achieving common goals. Competition is more likely to occur in advanced, modern, industrialized societies than in traditional, homogenous societies where cooperation appears to be more important.

### **5.2.3. Conflict**

In the process of competition for power (which could be economic, social, and political) and resources, conflict is bound to take place. Conflict involves disagreement and disharmony, which results due to differences in ideology, living standard, and other social factors. It is a universal phenomenon, an ever-present reality, taking place both at micro and macro levels. Conflict involves clash of interest between individuals in a social group



identical with the dominant groups. Assimilation involves the acceptance or the internalizing of the larger or dominant group's culture, values and life styles by the smaller or minority group. Assimilation could imposed or voluntary. In this age of globalization there are





societies, some people are regarded as more important than others (more worthy of respect than others), either within the society as a whole or in a certain situations.

Social stratification is the segmentation of society into different hierarchical arrangement or strata. It refers to the differences and inequalities in the socioeconomic life of people in a given society. It represents the ranking of individuals or social positions and statuses in the social structure. The term is borrowed from geology where it is used to explain the hierarchical arrangement of rocks and mineral in the earth's surface. When applied to the world of people, it refers to hierarchical arrangement of people into different classes or *strata* which is the division of a population into two or more layers, each of which is relatively homogenous, between which there are differences in privileges, restrictions, rewards and obligations (Maconis, 1997; Henslin and Nelson, 1995; Calhoun *et al* 1994).

### 5.3.2. The Importance of Studying Social Stratification

The study of social stratification is particularly important for sociologists. Some of the reasons for this may include (Giddens, 1995):

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universal, functional, inevitable, and beneficial and something which can't be avoided.

The proponents of the conflict theory of social stratification also accept the fact that social inequality exists in every society. But they do not believe that social stratification is functional. According to conflict theorists, it is the way of oppressing one group of people by another (Calhoun *et al.*, 1994).

#### **5.3.4. Forms of Social Stratification**

##### ***Social Class***

Social classes are groups of people who are stratified into different categories. In a more general sense, social class can be defined as a category or level of people found in similar positions in the social hierarchy. The criteria or the bases for dividing people in a given society into different social classes may include wealth, occupation, education, sex, family background, religion, income, among others. The societies in modern world have been divided usually into three; low class, middle class and upper class. Each of these three classes is usually divided in to sub-classes.

Social class is often characterized as an open and flexible system. Thus, we have societies which can be characterized as open system, as opposed to societies having closed system. This form of social class is common in industrialized, modern, heterogeneous and literate societies. Such system generally works in most contemporary societies of the world (Stockard, 1997).

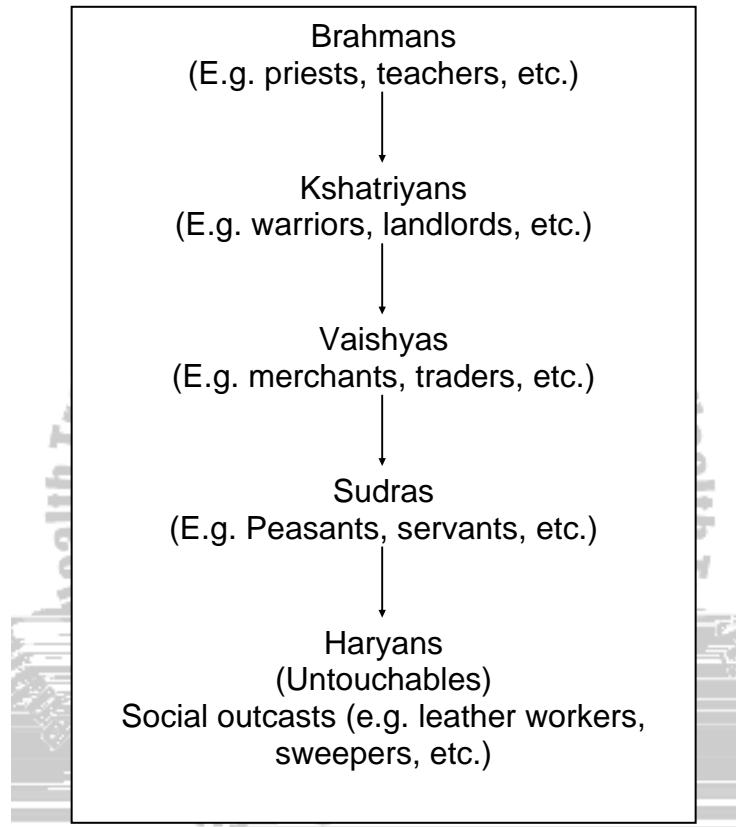
### **Caste**

Another well-known form of social stratification is the caste system. The system is based on religious and other strongly rooted traditional belief that cannot be changed or are very difficult to change. This is the form of social stratification whereby classification of people into different strata is made on the basis of usually religious and other very strong conventions/ traditions that are difficult to change. Some of the features of caste system include:

- It is a very rigid and closed system.
- People belonging to the same stratum practice endogamy.
- Intermarriage between strata is not permitted.



**Figure 5.1. Castes of the Hindu Society of India**



*Adapted from Henslin and Nelson, 1995. Down-to-Earth Sociology. Canadian Edition. Ontario: Allyn and Bacon*

In ancient Roman and Hebrew societies and other ancient and medieval civilizations, slaves, woman and children were often given lower and stigmatized positions in society. They were not, for example, considered when the population census was conducted.

In rural Ethiopian society, this form of stratification has existed for centuries and it still persists. Individuals in such traditional occupations as pottery, blacksmith, tannery, weaving, carpentry, and others such as so called slaves have been given lower places and are often denied free membership and social participation in various social affairs. Among the Wolayta, for example, such kinds of people are called by various names such as the *chinasha*



It is believed that such conditions have contributed to the slow socio-economic development of the country.

### **5.3.5. Consequences of Social Stratification on the Lives of Individuals**

Social stratification has crucial implications for the health and well-being of people. Social stratification is directly related to the issue of inequality, power imbalance etc, and these directly or indirectly influence the life chances of individuals in the social strata. Health status of individuals is among one of these life chances which can be significantly affected by one's location in the stratification system.

The different stratification systems on the basis of age, sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, etc, directly or indirectly promote unequal chances of living standards.

The key concepts in the relation between health and social stratification are the concepts of vulnerability, risk and hazard. **Vulnerability** is a sociological concept



Social mobility is a type of movement but it is not physical movement over geographical space although social mobility could involve, and be brought about by, physical mobility. It is movement in the social space, the shifting or changing of statuses or class positions. Social mobility is a social process that takes place among individual members or groups in a society, as they interact with each other. It is a process by which individuals or groups move from one status to another; or from one class or stratum to another.

Social mobility describes the volume and quality of movement among strata. That is the kind of movement that people make between the different social classes. Our unit of analysis in social mobility may be an individual, or a social group or a nation.

### **5.4.2. Types of Social Mobility**

Sociologists have identified different types of social mobility. The following is a brief discussion of the different types of social mobility (Team of Exeprts, 2000).

#### ***Vertical Social Mobility***

Vertical social mobility is a type of social mobility that individuals experience when they move from their social status to other higher or lower social status. It is a radical social change in an individual's position. It is a movement between different social classes and it involves a change in social position of an individual, a family or a group. It may be upward or downward.

#### ***Horizontal Social Mobility***

Horizontal social mobility is also called lateral social mobility. It is movement within a social class or a social position where the individual slightly improves and/or declines in his social position with in his/ her class level. Unlike vertical social mobility, it doesn't involve drastic changes.

***Inter-generational Social Mobility***

This type of social mobility involves the movement up or down, between the social class of one or two generations of a family, or a social group. In this mobility, our focus of attention is a social group, like the family. Here we look at change in the status position of the family over two or more generations, i.e., the social position of the grandfather, the father and the son.

If a child, for example, whose father was an upper class person as a result of his wealth becomes only a laborer in his own time, then he has experienced a downward intergenerational social mobility.

***Intra-generational mobility***

This concerns individual changes in positions during one's lifetime. It may also refer to the change that occurs in social groups or a country's socioeconomic position over a specified period of time. In other words, through achievement or other means one can move up from being a poor primary school teacher to a high court judge. Unlike the Inter-generational social mobility, intra-



or short cut avenues to social mobility. These include windfall gains in terms of inheritance, gambling, theft or financial corruption, winning a lottery game, etc. Such mobility is rare, bearing in mind that most inheritance is within the same social group.

The opportunities for upward social mobility are great in modern societies which have open systems. In such societies, there is freedom of vertical social mobility, and any member of a society may move up or down the social hierarchy. There are no legal and/or traditional restrictions that are put on social mobility on either direction. What count a lot are personal merits, competitions and efforts for achievement. On the other hand, in societies with closed system vertical, especially upward, is very difficult. In such societies, individuals born to a certain social position remain within that category for their lifetime. The most important determinants here are not individual's achievements, merits or personal effort, but what counts most are one's ancestry, racial background, family background, religion, sex, ethnicity, etc. (Henslin and Nelson, 1995)

#### 5.4.4. Barriers to Upward Social Mobility

These are factors that make it difficult to individual families or groups to move from one status position to another. Such barriers may include various social, psychological, cultural, economic, political and other related factors. Lack of opportunity, motivation, commitment, interest, or positive attitude, etc., is very crucial psychosocial factors. Other most important barriers may include one's own physical condition, lack of access to an appropriate modern education; inequality in the distribution of inherited wealth; one's color or ethnic origin, religion, etc. These are the most obvious barriers to social mobility.

##### **Box 5.2. Types of social mobility**

- *Vertical social mobility*
- *Horizontal social mobility*
- *Intra-generational social mobility*
- *Inter-generational social mobility*



## 5.5. Social Change

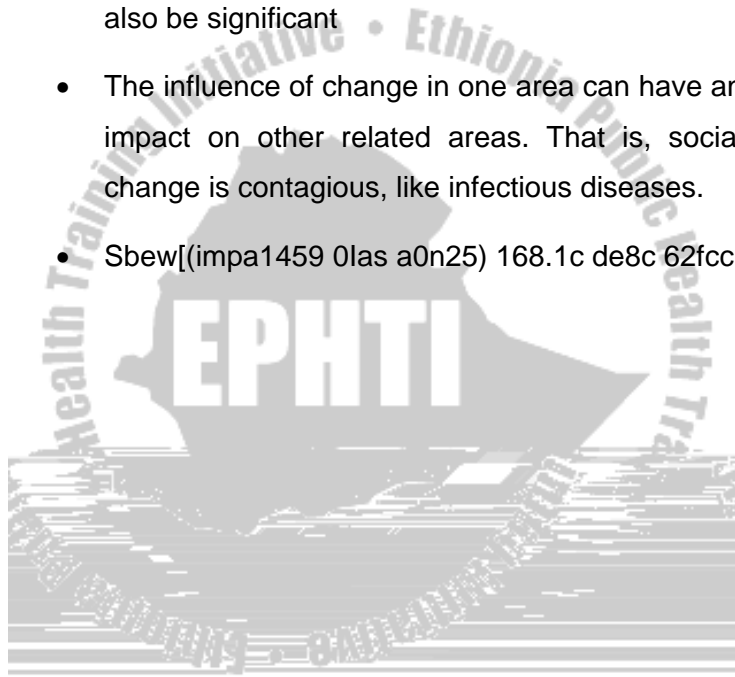
### 5.5.1. Definition and Basic Characteristics of Social Change

**Social change** may be defined as the alteration or transformation at large scale level in the social structure, social institutions, social organization and patterns of social behavior in a given society or social system. Social change can also be defined as the alteration, rearrangement or total replacement of phenomena, activities, values or processes through time in a society in a succession of events. The alteration or rearrangement may involve simple or complex changes in the structure, form or shape of the social phenomena. Sometimes it may mean the complete wiping out of the phenomenon and their total replacement by new forms (Calhoun *et al*, 1994).

Some minor changes that take place in the lives of individuals and small, limited groups may not be regarded as social changes although these kinds of changes may be the manifestations or effects of



- Change occurs both at micro-level and macro-level. The point here is that while social change often refers to noticeable changes in social phenomena, we must not lose sight of the fact that small changes in minor relationships can also be significant
- The influence of change in one area can have an impact on other related areas. That is, social change is contagious, like infectious diseases.
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### ***Structural Functionalist Theory***

This theory states that social change takes place as the diversification and division of labor increases in the social system of a given society. Structural functionalists focus on the cohesion, order and stability of social system. Change disrupts the orderly functioning of the system. Structural- functionalist theory focuses on the effect of social change on the structure of society, the function and dysfunction of change, stability and equilibrium of the social system. When change takes place, it affects the order and equilibrium of the social system and thus the system has to bring itself back to the equilibrium, to smooth functioning of the system.

### ***Conflict Theory***

This theory states that social change takes place due to the ever-present class conflicts in the social system for the better or worse. According to this theory, thus, social change is the result of social conflicts and is essential and beneficial. Every social system contains within itself the seeds of change as far as it is a system wherein exploitation of one group by another exists. Social

change continues to become inevitable until a classless society emerges, one in which conflicts cease to exist.

***Cyclic Theory***

This theory states that society undergoes change in circular manner. Social change takes a cyclic form, from worse to better, back again from better to worse. Social change is not always for the better. Societies may grow, advance, and reach peak stage of development, and then they may stagnate and finally collapse, with the potential for rising again.

***Linear Theory***

This theory states that change takes place in a linear manner. The direction of social change is from worse to better, simple to complex and backward to modern. In other words, according to linear theory, social change is evolutionary; it is always towards the better way until perfection is achieved.



emergence of HIV /AIDS as pestilence is for example having great effects on the social arrangement and organization of societies.

Demographic factors-migration, urbanization, population growth, etc., are also important ones in bringing about socio-cultural change. Political factors such as planned change by government, change of state ideology, etc., are also important. Other factors such as war, scientific invention and discoveries, diffusion of non-material and material elements of culture through education and trade relations, etc., also promote social change.

Last but not the least psychosocial factors like beliefs, vested interests, sacred values, attitudes, resistance to change or to accept and entertain new things and intending to maintain the *status quo* are also very important forces.

## **5.6. Chapter Summary**

In the organized social relationship of human groups, social processes take place. Social processes are repetitive forms of actions, patterns of social behaviors.

Social processes manifest themselves through various modes such as competition, conflict, cooperation, accommodation and assimilation. These processes take place on continuous basis at micro and macro levels. These modes of social processes are interrelated and each may yield the other, and they take place in cyclic manner.

Social stratification, social mobility and social change are the three important aspects of social processes. Social stratification refers to the classification of society into different social strata that involve inequalities or differences in lifestyle and living standards of people. They refer to power imbalance and unequal distribution of resources among people. The word stratification is originally used in geology to differentiate one rock type from the other. By the same token, that is, society in general is segmented. There are two forms of social



individuals in the stratum or groups is determined by age-old, traditional, religious values, norms and principles, which are strong and difficult to change.

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals and groups in the social space. Physical mobility is not social mobility but may contribute to social mobility. Social mobility may be vertical or horizontal and intra-generational or intergenerational.

The other aspect of social processes is social change. The study of social change has been a major concern in the discipline of sociology. Sociologists are particularly interested in this dynamic aspect of social system.



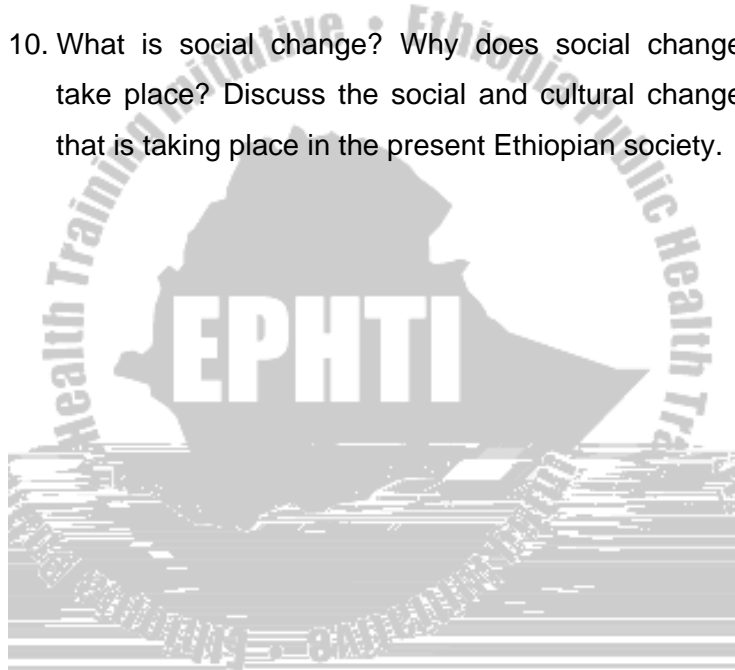
There are many theoretical explanations of social change. Of this, structural-functionalist theory focuses on social order, consensus and stability. It states that social change occurs due to growth, complexity in social structure-due to growth in social differentiation. Modernization theory focuses on the idea of modernization/Modernization is increasing ability to master environment. According to this theory, change occurs in Third World societies when they make effort to imitate advanced western societies in various respects. The conflict school of thought stands against the school of structural functionalism. According to the latter, conflict is the main factor behind social change and is useful and necessary for change.



## Review Questions

1. What are social processes? Compare social processes with biological processes.
2. Discuss the necessity of competition and conflict as social processes.
3. Discuss the micro- and macro aspects of assimilation as a social process.
4. What is social stratification? How does the concept of social stratification compare with stratification in the world of rocks and minerals?
5. How is social stratification created? What is the necessity of social stratification in society?
6. Discuss the different forms of social stratification.
7. What is the effect of caste as a social stratification on the living standards of individuals and social groups? Do you think that there are diseases individuals suffer from that are the results of social stratification? If yes mention and discuss some of them.

8. What is social mobility? Discuss why social mobility takes place, the effects of it on the well being of individuals in a given society.
9. Discuss the type of social immobility you or your family has experienced or is experiencing.
10. What is social change? Why does social change take place? Discuss the social and cultural change that is taking place in the present Ethiopian society.



## CHAPTER SIX

### AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL PATHOLOGIES

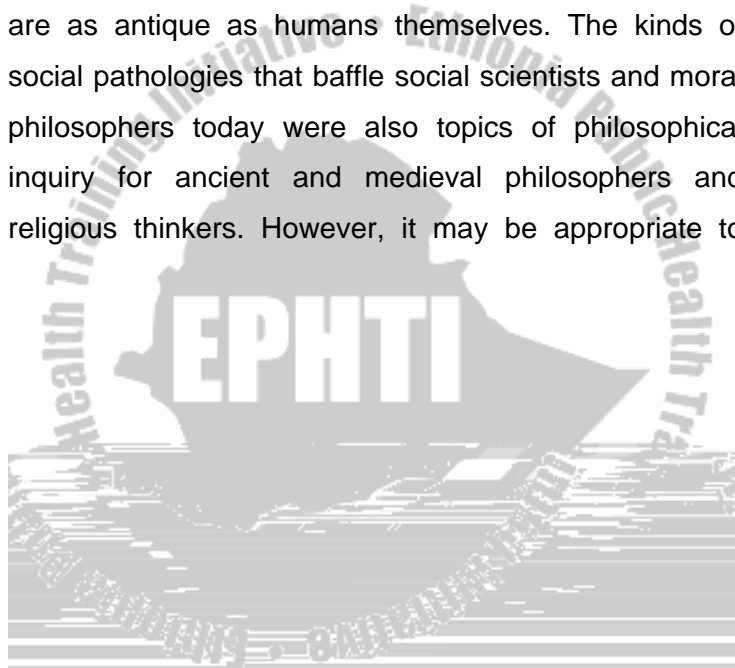
#### ***Learning Objectives***

After learning this chapter, students are expected to:

- Define the concept of social pathology/ problem;
- Appreciate the social and non-biological determinants of the various forms of problems that individuals suffer from in society;
- Understand why social pathologies occur in a given society;
- Describe the various forms of social pathologies of the contemporary society; and
- Be aware of the range, extent and major types of social problems/ pathologies in contemporary Ethiopia; and explain the socio-political and historical factors and bases of these problems.

## 6.1. The Concept of Social Pathology

Social scientists usually talk about *social pathologies* or social problems. Social pathologies have existed as long as humans began living in groups. In other words, they are as antique as humans themselves. The kinds of social pathologies that baffle social scientists and moral philosophers today were also topics of philosophical inquiry for ancient and medieval philosophers and religious thinkers. However, it may be appropriate to



groups may not be regarded as a social problem. A social pathology affects society, or its institutions and organizations at large. However, the very term *social problem* may mean any problem that has social origins,



## **6.2. The Universality and Locality of Some Social Pathologies**

It may be right to state that some social problems are universal in their nature; this means that they occur everywhere across all societies. They may derive from the fundamental similarity of the nature, origin and destiny of all human societies. As anthropologists argue, all human beings share common bio-psychological problems and as such they have more or less similar basic interests, questions, fears, etc. Although they may vary in terms of scale, all societies face such kinds of social problems as for example, juvenile delinquencies, marriage breakdown and divorce, parent-children conflicts, tensions over limited resources between groups, wars and inter-group skirmishes, alcoholism, environmental pollution, prostitution, homelessness, begging, etc.

However, some of the social problems seem to emanate from the local conditions; they are the manifestations of the specific cultural and ecological settings of a society, as well as the reflections of the socio-historical and



political dimensions of the society. They also reflect the level of technological advancement a society has arrived at. For example, the major social problems that abound in the industrially complex society of the West include environmental pollution, marital breakdown and familial conflicts, juvenile delinquencies, suicide, drug addiction, and the collapse of morality, among others. These seem to be more rampant in the Western societies. On the other hand, the Third World societies suffer from such kinds of social problems as urban slums, housing shortage, urban and rural poverty, sanitation problems, famine, ethnic conflicts, lack of good governance and corruption, streetism and homelessness, among others.

### **6.3. Social Deviance and Crime**

Deviance is behavior that members of a group or society see as violating their norms. Definition of deviance varies according to groups. Whether an action or behavior is considered deviant depends on time, place and social situations (Henslin and Nelson, 1995).

There are psychological and sociological explanations of deviance. Psychological theories focus on the personality of individuals. Certain genetic and biochemical abnormalities lead individuals to commit deviance and criminal acts. Sociological theories focus on the forces beyond the individual. **Differential association theory** maintains that people learn deviant acts through socialization; **structural strain theory** maintains that deviance occurs when conformity to widely accepted norms of behavior fails to satisfy legitimate, culturally approved desires. According to the **control theory**, every person is naturally prone to make deviance, but most of us conform to norms because of effective system of inner and outer control. It is those who have less effective control who deviate. Another sociological theory called **labeling theory** states that behaviors are deviant when and only because people label them as such (Caffrey and Mundy, 1995).

In general biologists and psychologists look into the individual, while sociologists look outside of the individual for explanations of why people commit deviance and crime,

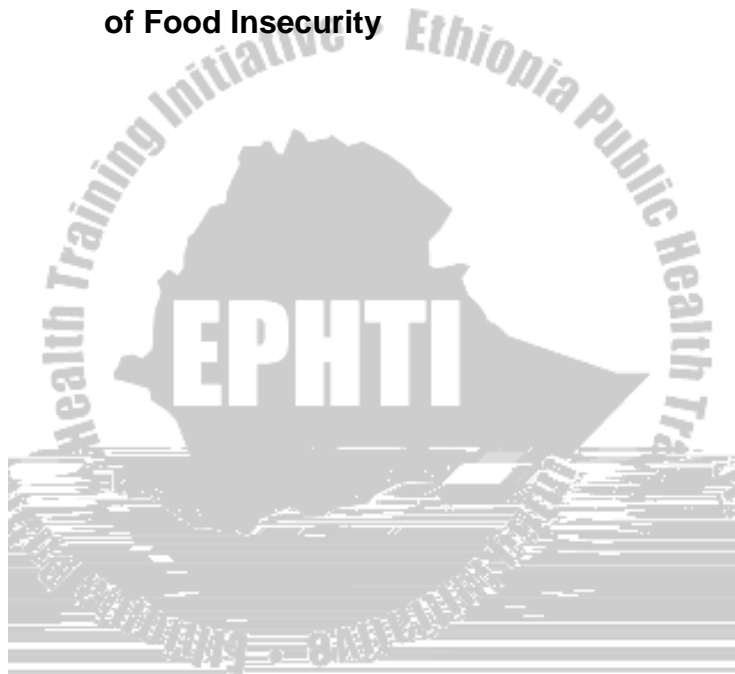
## 6.4. A Survey of Some Social Problems in Ethiopia

A cursory look at the streets of major urban centers in Ethiopia shows that this is a time when our contemporary Ethiopian society is hosting a multiplicity of social problems. The nature, type, intensity and complexity of the social problems in contemporary Ethiopia are reflections of:

- The country's long history of underdevelopment;
- Socio-cultural backwardness;
- Poor level of scientific and technological development;
-

The following are some of the major social problems in Ethiopia.

**6.4.1. Vulnerability to Famine and the Problem of Food Insecurity**





cases in point. Such conditions are at the other extreme to some health problems like obesity in affluent societies.

#### **6.4.2. Prostitution**

Prostitution as a social problem seems to be associated with the growth of urbanization and urbanism as a way of life. Although it has existed throughout history, it has become rampant in this age of modernization. Some cities in south East Asian countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are notorious for the sex industry. The term prostitution now appears to be outdated and a more humane term is now *commercial sex work*. This term is introduced to indicate that like any other work, prostitution is also an industry, where of life. Altho03tbm9like any  
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has now become a major social pathology in the country. Urban centers like Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Nazareth, Shashemene, Dire Dawa, among others are major centers of commercial sex work. A recent media dispatch disclosed that in Nazareth Town, there are about 3500 commercial sex workers. Multiple sexual partnership and commercial sex work are thus the most visible pathways for the spread of STIs and HIV/AIDS. Addressing this social problem at its root causes might, therefore, would help very much in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The root causes of commercial sex work are usually poverty, harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, forced marriage and marriage by abduction, among others. Dysfunctional marriages, entrenched poverty and economic dependency often drive females to prostitution; and this may in turn contribute to the spread of STIs including HIV/AIDS among women and the general population. Young girls from rural areas often flee to urban centers from harsh social and cultural conditions in the rural areas. They end up engaging in commercial sex work to earn a living.

### 6.4.3. Unemployment

Governments in developed and undeveloped countries alike these days face the mounting social problem of unemployment. In Ethiopia, too, unemployment has become one of the major social problems. The unemployed are those who currently in search of a gainful job and are dependent on somebody else for their living. There are other categories like the underemployed; these are those who are engaged in a job that does not match their level of expertise or





such as drug addictions, alcoholism, organized crimes (like robbery), suicide, and violence against women, theft and begging (Youth Affairs Coordination Office, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, 2002).

#### **6.4.4. The Youth and Drug Addiction**

The problem of drug addiction is now a number one social problem, particularly in developed societies. The problem is becoming rampant in Ethiopia as well. It is now common to hear from the electronic media and to read from the print media that the tradition of drug usage is a growing one in many large urban centers in the country. Recent radio news (November, 2004) disclosed that in the town of Nazareth, there were about 75 clandestine houses where various types of harmful drugs are sold and used. The drug tradition is often associated with the growth of overnight clubs, bars and the chance for multiple sexual partnerships also becomes very high.

*Chat*, a local mild narcotic plant, has become a very common type of drug for many youth as well as adults. Many have become dependent on the stimulant drug and it seems that without it some fail to efficiently carry out their tasks. Studies show that *chat* chewing is associated with many adverse mental and physical health problems. The growing number of the mentally disturbed persons, holding a piece of *chat* plant, roaming the streets of some urban centers like Jimma, Awassa, Dilla and other towns in Southern Ethiopia (Youth Affairs Coordination Office, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, 2002).

#### **6.4.5. Rural to Urban Migration, the Refugee Problem and Health**

Ethiopia as a Sub-Saharan African country has experienced the sweeping influence of the wave of migration that is better understood in the political, economic, ecological and socio-cultural contexts of the contemporary world. The most significant event in the place of Ethiopians in international migration is the period following the downfall of the (Ethiopian) imperial

rule and the onset of the communist-oriented, revolutionary rule by the Dergue regime. What might be called the Ethiopian Diaspora came into the world scene in the late 1960s and 1970's (Bekele, 2002). Innumerable Ethiopians constituting particularly the intellectuals fled the country as forced migrants mainly to the USA, and scattering well over the world. The incessant flow of Ethiopian migrants, as part of the international migration, mainly spurred by the search for better living opportunities, often masked under the facade of fleeing political persecution, has still continued unabated. The impact of this on the country's socio-economic landscape, be it negative or positive, is incalculable, particularly the migration of intellectuals and the ensuing brain drain is no simple matter (Dutoit, 1990).

The various ethno-linguistic groups in the country have engaged in migration and population movements since time immemorial for a multiplicity of reasons. Migration at both the micro- and macro levels between regions and within regions, from rural to urban and vice versa, from urban to urban and rural to rural, all these have

continued until today. The following have significant places in the drama of internal migration in the country,

- The government actions of resettling people from one region to another such as the rather massive, involuntary villagization program of the Dergue or the current EPRDF resettlement program as part of the country's socio-economic development efforts;
- The civil wars that have raged between the various bodies for long period of time;
- The conquest of the demised successive imperial systems as an empire building agenda;
- The ever-recurring drought and the perennial, romanticized famine question and food insecurity of the country;
- The rapidly growing population and the resultant resource depletion and ecological deterioration;
- The increasing urbanization and the seeming presence of better opportunities therein that act as pull factors; and
- The weakening of the traditional social-cultural and political structure of the various ethnic groups; among others.

The issue of rural to-urban migration in Ethiopia is high on the federal and regional governments' agenda. Ethiopia's 1993 National Population Policy clearly stipulated negative ramification of migration on the country's socio-economic development efforts. The quality of life in the migrant sending rural communities as well in the receiving urban areas of Ethiopia has deteriorated tremendously. The large, steady flow of the mainly productive male sections of the rural communities to urban areas has many bad consequences. The sending areas would face serious productive labor shortage. The receiving areas, where there are little or no adequate social services and employment opportunities, will face the problem of crimes, housing shortages, growth of urban slums, and other undesirable, anti-societal phenomena (Abdullahi, 1994).

When we come to health, migration is an important factor in determining the health status of individuals and groups. People migrate with expectations of better living and health conditions. But very often, many individuals

end up in poor living and health conditions. This is particularly common among the refugees and the lower level labor migrants. The recent ETV dispatch (December, 2004) on the harsh conditions of the Ethiopian women who live as labor migrants in the Arab World is a case in point. Many are subjected to harsh treatments, poor pay, physical and mental abuses. Many refugees are subjected to unhygienic living conditions, poor nutrition, to the extent of starvation, and outbreaks of infectious diseases. There are also cases of sexual harassment and rapes.

Uncontrolled rural to urban migration (boosted by population growth) and rapid urbanization also lead may lead to the mushrooming of squatter settlements and slums which in turn increase peoples' vulnerability to epidemic diseases.

While migration may thus have adverse consequences the lives of individuals, we should not also forget the positive, developmental effects of migration, be it internal or international migration. In fact, it is all too well known that people migrating from the Third World to the

West are making significant contributions to the economic development of their home countries (Dutoit, 1990).

#### **6.4.6. Population Explosion and Ecological Degradation**

The Ethiopian population has grown from a mere 30 million in the early 1960s to about 70 million currently. At the present rate of annual growth, which is close to 3%, demographers predict that the number will double itself in a short period of time. The country is the third most populous in Africa, next to Nigeria and Egypt (Faisal, 1993).

The country's population growth is not matched with a correspondent growth in economy. The country is one of the poorest in terms of many development parameters.

conditions, due to deforestation, over-utilization of resources, environmental pollutions, etc. The recurrent drought and famine is one of the effects of the deteriorating ecological conditions (Fasil, *op cit*).

The issues of population explosion and ecological deterioration are now major social issue and the Ethiopian Government has taken them as priority areas.

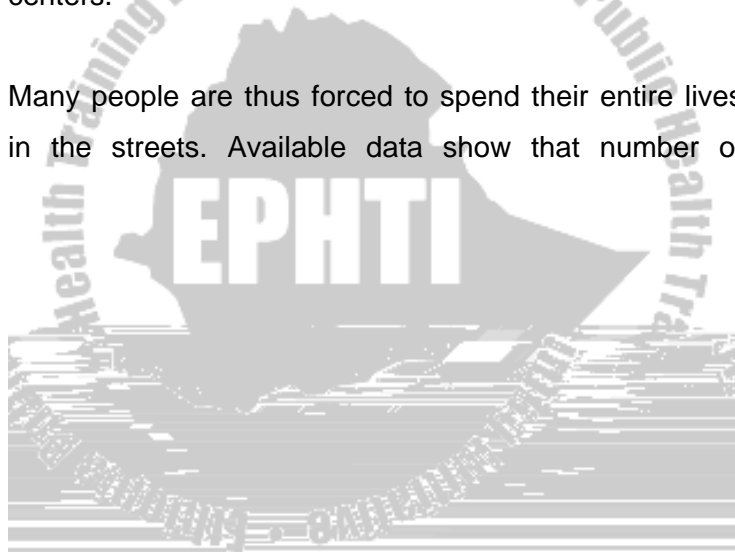
#### **6.4.7. Growth of Urbanization, Urban Poverty, Housing Problem, Homelessness and Begging**

About 15% of the population of Ethiopia lives in urban areas. With growth of urbanization, many social problems have emerged. The problem of urban slums, increasing poor quality of life and poverty, shortage of basic social services such as clean water, electricity, communications facilities, housing, etc, and the growing rate of crimes and deviance. Urban slums are centers for undesirable social behaviors such as commercial sex work, theft, robbery, drug trafficking and use, sanitation problems, among others.



With the growing number of urban population, access to good housing is becoming increasingly problematic. Studies indicate that many urban people live in substandard houses and many more even lack accesses to housing. Thus, homelessness has now become a growing social problem in many urban centers.

Many people are thus forced to spend their entire lives in the streets. Available data show that number of





## 6.5. Chapter Summary

The terms *social pathology* and *social problem* are often interchangeably used. They refer to the diseased conditions of society. As the physical body suffers from various ailments, the society as a system also suffers from various pathologies that threaten its proper functioning and very existence. Sociologists prefer to use “social problems” to “social pathologies”.

Problems that are limited to an individual’s psychological dimension or micro level social groups may not constitute social problems *per se* although they are the manifestation of the diseased conditions of society. Some social problems have universal or global nature and others are tied to a society’s level of economic and technological development, history, ecology, socio-political and cultural set-up. Some social problems are thus more rampant in industrialized societies and others prevail in less industrialized societies.

The major social problems in our contemporary Ethiopia include famine, prostitution, unemployment, drug addiction, homelessness, begging, urban poverty, and population explosion and ecological deterioration, among others. These problems have escalated since recent decades. They are the reflections of the country's socio-political history, harmful traditional beliefs and practices, poverty, and natural factors, among others.



## Review Questions

1. What do you understand by the terms *social pathologies* and



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AS CHANGE AGENTS

### Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe the concepts of social work;
- Understand why social work and social work are necessitated;
- Identify the different types of methods of social work;
- Define the concepts of change agents and client groups and appreciate the role of health professionals as change agents;
- Identify the different roles of health professionals as change agents;
- Understand the principles of professional behaviors of change agents; and

- Describe and internalize the fundamental guiding principles of social work and its relevance for health professionals.

## 7.1. What is Social Action?

As can be understood from the name itself, there are three fundamental points in the concept: first the existence of social action, then those who do the action and third those who are expected to benefit from the action.

**Social action** is described as an individual's, group's, or community's effort within the framework of social philosophy and practices that aim at achieving social progress to modify social policies to improve social legislation, health and welfare services. From this description, we can understand that social action is an active, conscious, well thought effort.

This means any concerned individual, group or the community itself may involve in the task and process of social action to help other individuals, and groups who

are facing a certain social problem or for whom a





Social work is a professional discipline (within the framework of social welfare programs and services)l205 T4







- Types of problems individuals face,
- Why people are in socially strainful situations, and
- The role of social forces and the environment on the individual.

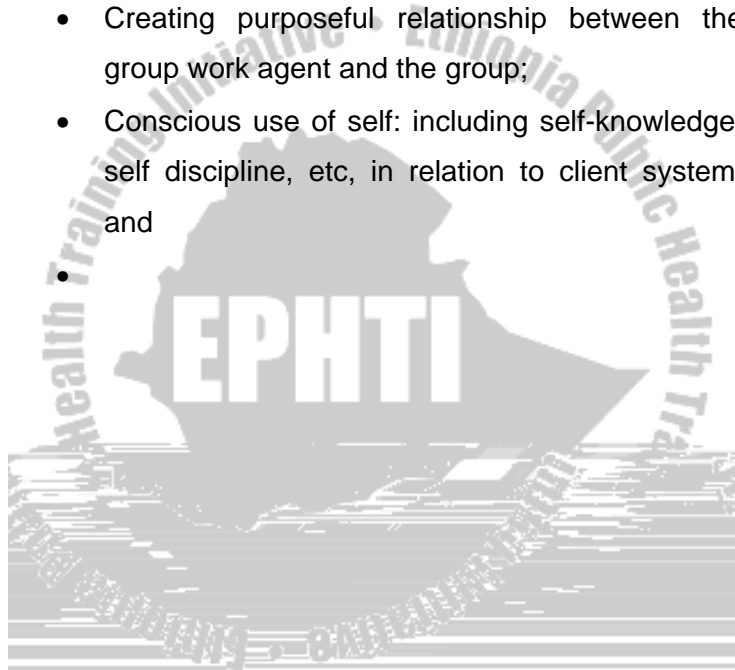
### **Group Work**

Working with groups is called group work. It is the method (technique) of sponsoring and working with voluntary social groups such as families, clubs and gangs in order to develop socially desirable goals (qualities). The emphasis is treatment of the individual. Unlike casework, group work focuses on the relation of the individual to the group and social growth of the group itself.

The aim is to give the individual satisfying experience through group relation and eventually enable him/her to make his/her own contributions to the life of the society.

Here, consideration is not only on the economic needs of the individuals, but other aspects such as affection, security, acceptance and other emotional and psychosocial needs of the individual. Some of the principles of group-work include:

- A group worker has to be able to make the client system solve their problem;
- Use of scientific methods like observation, analysis and fact-finding are essential;
- Creating purposeful relationship between the group work agent and the group;
- Conscious use of self: including self-knowledge, self discipline, etc, in relation to client system; and



The most relevant method of social work is community organization in respect to the problem of developing countries. On the other hand, case group works are more applicable to the problems in developed societies. This is because most of the social pathologies in industrialized societies are at individual and group levels (Morales and Sheafor, *op cit*).

**Box 7.1. Three methods of social work**

- *Case work*: working with individuals in strainful situations
- *Group work*: Working with small social groups facing certain social problems
- *Community organization*: working wit the whole community

### 7.3. The Limitations and Challenges of



problems are left unaddressed, while attention is given to the superficial issues, the “symptoms” of the problems. More structural issues such as the





## 7.4. Planned Social Change, Change Agents and Client Systems

Despite the fact that human society seems to stick to its traditions, beliefs, customs and cultural patterns, there is always an undercurrent of change taking place from time to time. Change is inevitable and universal; it may take place at the expense of human social life and progress. Planned social change is essentially a social action to bring about positive social change in the community; it is a conscientious, deliberate and purposeful action to achieve a determined change in the part of a client system (Suppes and Wells, *op cit*; Indrani, 1998).

**Client systems** are also called **target groups**. These are people who are in need of the guidance and professional assistance of **change agents**. More specifically, by client system/ target group, we mean an individual, group or community or any larger or smaller system that are helped by the professionals.

**Change agents** are persons who are trained to give guidance and assistance to the community, in need of desired planned social change. They are different forms of agents who work with (in) the community, helping the community and introducing new useful ideas and innovation for diffusion.

### **7.5. The Role of Change Agents and Professional Behavior**

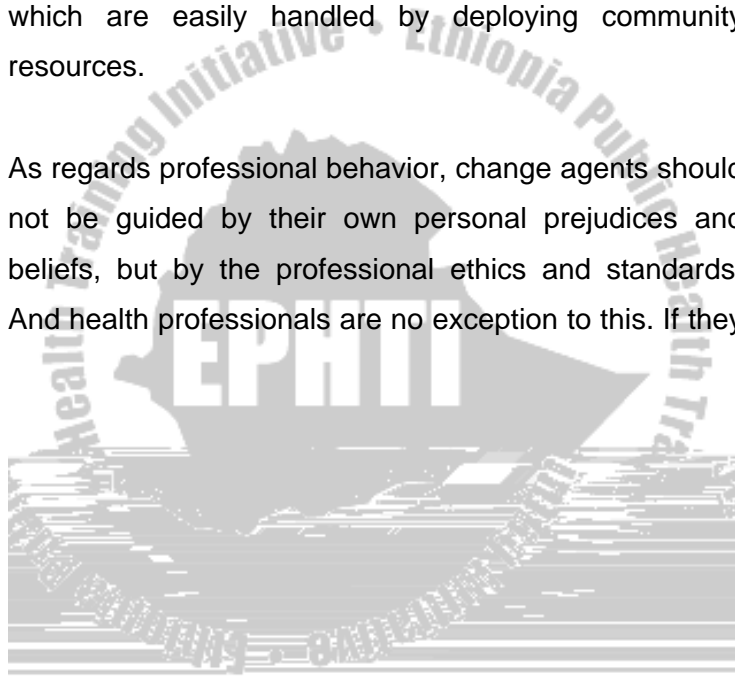
Change agents do not to impose their wish and decisions on the client system. The basic role is *to help the client system help themselves*. Change agents should play their roles as catalysts, assistants, coordinators, leaders, guides, etc Suppes and Wells, *op cit*; Let us see some roles of the change agents.

***The role of enabler:*** change agents work with clients.

They enable the people; supply the means and direction for the client to do something. They temporarily stay among the people to show them the means of doing things

**The role of a catalyst:** As catalysts, social workers stimulate the people. They act as enzymes, so to speak. When the people face lots of problems and fail to know which problem are the most serious ones, change agents may show them to select one or two problems which are easily handled by deploying community resources.

As regards professional behavior, change agents should not be guided by their own personal prejudices and beliefs, but by the professional ethics and standards. And health professionals are no exception to this. If they select one or two py





Change agents should be guided by the fundamental guiding principles of the methods of social action or social work. Whether the change agents work with an individual person, i.e., *casework*, a social group, i.e., *group work*, or community, i.e., *community organization*, they have to take into account the basic working principles and approaches. In any case change agents should play their roles as catalysts, leaders, organizers, researchers, guides, counselors and brokers; and they should carry out their duties in ethically and professionally appropriate ways. They should also be equipped with appropriate knowledge of relevant theories, and be sensitive to the client systems culture, social or community situations, institutional arrangements, ecology, and other dimensions.

## Review Questions

1. Explain the term social action?
2. Define the concept of social work and discuss its fundamental guiding philosophies. Discuss the relevance of these principles in your future professional practice as a health worker.
3. Mention the three methods of social work. Which of the methods of social work is more relevant to the conditions of developing countries? Why? Which one of them is more suited to the conditions of developed societies? Why?
4. Define the term *change agent*. What kind of changes are the health professionals expected to bring about in the lives of communities? Discuss.
5. Who are client groups?
6. Mention and discuss the key roles of health professionals as change agents.

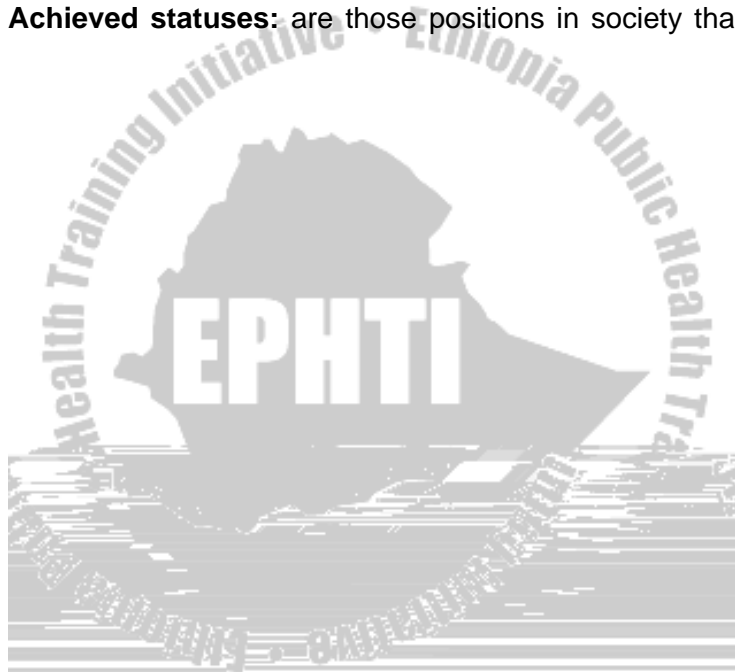
7. Discuss the appropriate professional behavior of health workers.
8. Discuss the basic principles of casework as one of methods of social work.



## GLOSSARY

**Accommodation:** is a social process whereby people try to accept one another, avoiding the sources of conflict to live in peaceful coexistence

**Achieved statuses:** are those positions in society that





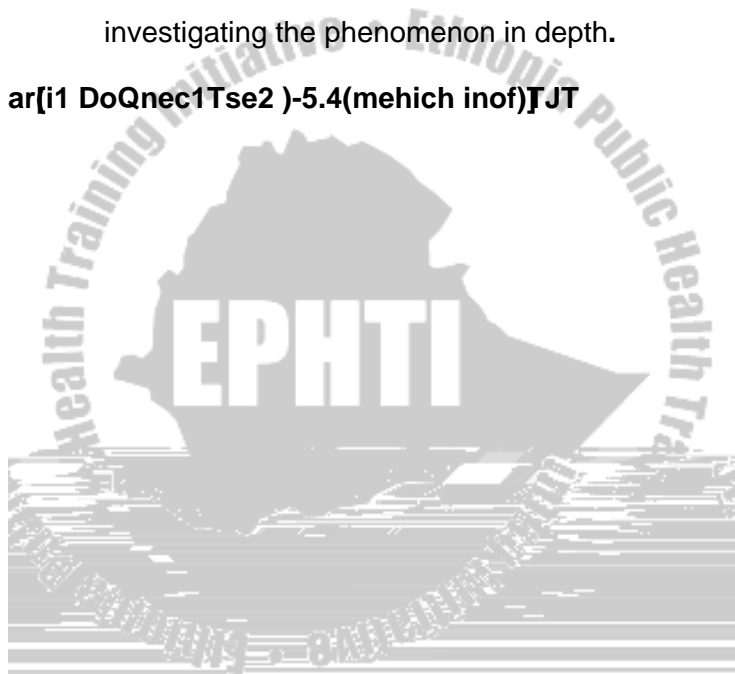
**Alienation:** The phenomenon of being dehumanized



**Avenues of Social Mobility:** are the doors through which a person moves upward in the social hierarchy.

**Case Study:** A method which involves investigating a certain issue as a case taking longer time and investigating the phenomenon in depth.

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**Childhood socialization** (see *primary socialization*)

**Classical conditioning:** a type of conditioning in which the response remains constant while the stimuli vary.

**Client systems:** (also called **target groups**), are people who are in need of the guidance and professional assistance of **change agents**.

**Community organization:** A method of social work in which the whole community is addressed as a target.

**Competition:** is the process where by individuals, groups, societies, and countries make active efforts to win towards getting their share of the limited resources.

**Conditioning:** refers to the response pattern that is built into an organism as a result of stimuli in the environment, as in Pavlovian experiment. In contrast, in

**Conformists:** Those members of a society or a group who abide by the rules and norms of the society (or the group).

**Control theory:** A sociological theory of crime and deviance which states that every person is naturally prone to make deviance, but most of us conform to norms because of effective system of inner and outer control

**Cooperation:** is a social process whereby people join hands towards achieving common goals.

**Cross sectional survey:** A survey technique which aims to find out what opinions research participants across sections of society have about a certain phenomena at a given point of time his survey represents fixed reflections of one moment in time.

**Cultural imperialism:** the unequal cultural exchange in the global system whereby western material and non-material cultures have come to occupy a dominating and imposing roles over the indigenous cultures of the Third World peoples.

**Cultural relativism:** The view that each society's culture should be understood in its won context; one's cultural lens should not be applied in judging other cultural values

**Cultural universals:** those culture traits, norms, values, rules etc which are shared by more or less all people in a given group or which are found universally among all societies

**Cultural variability:** refers to the diversity of cultures across societies and places

**Culture:** A complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society

**Culture lag:** A phenomenon whereby non-material culture changes slowly, while material culture change fast.

**Culture lead:** The phenomenon whereby in some less developed societies, the change of non-material culture may outpace the material culture.

**Culture shock:** is the psychological and social maladjustment at micro or macro level that is experienced for the first time when people encounter new cultural elements such as new things, new ideas, new concepts, seemingly strange beliefs and practices

**Custom:** Is a folkway or form of social behavior that, having persisted a long period of time, has become traditional and well established in a society and has received some degree of formal recognition

**Deductive approach:** An approach in which the researcher attempts to derive specific assertions and claims from a general theoretical principle; an approach which goes from general theory to particular claims

**De-socialization:** refers to stripping individuals of their former life styles, beliefs, values and attitudes so that they may take up other partially or totally



**Enlightenment:** is the eighteenth century social philosophical movement that emphasized human progress and the power of reason, and based on



**Family:** is a minimal social unit that cooperated economically and assumes responsibilities for rearing children.

**Fashion:**





**Formal laws:** are written and codified social norms

**Group work:** A method of social work in which small sized social groups facing certain social problems are addressed.

**Horticultural societies:** are those whose economy is based on cultivating plants by the use of simple tools, such as digging sticks, hoes, axes, etc.

**Horizontal social mobility:** is movement within a social class or a social position where the individual slightly improves and/or declines in his social position within his/ her class level.

**Hunting and gathering societies:** The simplest type of society that is in existence today and that may be regarded the oldest is that whose economic organization is based on hunting and gathering.

**Hypothesis:** A tentative statement waiting to be tested or proved by empirical data

**Ideal role:** that which a person is expected to perform theoretically.

**In-depth interview:** A method of qualitative data collection in which the researcher asks informants on certain issues taking long time and going deeply into the issue.

**Inductive method:** is a method by which the scientist first makes observation and collects data, on the basis of which he or she formulates **hypothesis** and **theories**

**Industrial Society:** An industrial society is one in which goods are produced by machines powered by fuels instead of by animal and human energy

**Inter-generational Social Mobility:** This type of social mobility involves the movement up or down, between the social class of one or two generations of a family, or a social group

**Inter-role conflict:** role conflicts occurring between two or more roles.

**Intra-generational mobility:** a type of social mobility referring to individual changes in positions during one's lifetime. It may also refer to the change that occurs in social groups or a country's socioeconomic position over a specified period of time.

**Intra-role conflicts:** role conflict occurring when a person feels strains and inadequacies in accomplishing a certain role, or when there is a gap between what a person does and what a group expects of him or her.

**Key informant interview:** An anthropological method in which very knowledgeable individuals in the community are identified and the researcher learns lots of issues about the community life.

**Labeling theory:** A sociological theory of crime and deviance which states that behaviors are deviant when and only because people label them as such







**Pastoral societies:** are those whose livelihood is based on pasturing of animals, such as cattle, camels, sheep and goats

**Planned social change:** a conscientious, deliberate and purposeful action to achieve a determined change in the part of a client system

**Positive Social Control:** the mechanisms which involve rewarding and encouraging those who abide by the norms

**Post-industrial society:** This is a society based on information, services and high technology, rather than on raw materials and manufacturing

**Post-modernism:** is a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon which mainly rejects order and progress, objective and universal truth; and supports the need for recognizing and tolerating different forms of reality.

**Post-structuralism:** the theory which focuses on the power of language in constructing knowledge and identity.

**Primary data:** Is that which is collected by the sociology themselves during their own research using research tools such as experiment, survey,





**Quantitative data:** those which are mainly expressed in terms of numbers, percentages, rates to measure size, magnitude, etc.

**Quasi-groups:** Collectivity of people which lack some of the essential features of a social group.

**Questionnaires:** highly structured questions, used in collecting usually quantitative information.

**Radical feminism:** A variant of feminist sociology that advocates the fundamental need for societal change.

**Random sample:** A technique wherein all members of a population have equal chances of being included in the study population.

**Rational choice theory:** This theory assumes that individuals will operate in rational way and will seek to benefit themselves in the life choices they make

**Repressive socialization:** A type of mode of socialization which is oriented towards gaining obedience.

**Re-socialization:**



**Secondary data:** are those which are already collected by some one else found in various sources as documents or archives. They include: official statistical documents, mass media sources (such as electronic media – radio, television, films, etc; and print media such as newspapers, magazines, journals, posters, brochures, leaflets, sign boards, etc.)

**Secondary functions:** are the indirect, hidden, or latent functions of social institutions.

**Secondary groups:** More formal social groups which are characterized by impersonal, bureaucratic social relationships.

**Secondary socialization:** A stage of socialization which takes after childhood, during adult life, when individuals are taking new roles.

**Social action:** refers to any action oriented to influence by another person or persons. It is not necessary for more than one person to be physically present for action to be regarded as social action

**Social change:** the alteration or transformation at large scale level in the social structure, social institutions, social organization and patterns of social behavior in a given society or social system.

**Social class:** A group of individuals who share similar socio-economic backgrounds

**Social conflict:** Conflict involving clash of interest between individuals in a social group like in a family or between groups or societies. It results due to power imbalance, due to unfair distribution of resources.

**Social conflict theory:** This theory is also called Marxism; to indicate that the main impetus to the theory derives from the writings of Karl Marx This theory sees society in a framework of class conflicts and focuses on the struggle for scarce resources by different groups in a given society

**Social construction of reality:** the process by which we take the various elements available in our society and put them together to form a particular view of reality.

**Social control:** is thus simply defined as all the mechanisms and processes employed by a society to ensure conformity

**Social Darwinism:** Spencer's ideas of the evolution of human society from the lowest ("barbarism") to highest form ("civilized") according to fixed laws, which is analogous to the biological evolutionary model.

**Social deviance:** movement away from the accepted social standards.

**Social dynamic:** A Comtean concept, which signifies the changing, progressing and developmental dimensions of society,

**Social exchange theory:** The theory that focuses on

**Social function:** are consequences for the operations of society.

**Social groups:** is the collectivity or set of people who involve in more or less permanent or enduring social interactions and relationships

**Social institution:** is an interrelated system of social roles and social norms, organized around the satisfaction of an important social need or social function.

**Social interaction:** Any action, event or phenomenon whereby two or more people are involved, saying or doing, or behaving in any manner

**Social mobility:** is movement in the social space, the shifting or changing of statuses or class positions. Social mobility is a social process that takes place among individual members or groups in a society, as they interact with each other.

**Social organization:** the pattern of individual and group relations. The term "organization" signifies technical arrangement of parts in a whole, and the term "social", indicates the fact that individual and group relations are the outcomes of social processes

**Social pathology:** generally refers to the *pathos of society*, i.e., the "social diseases" that affect society.

**Social problem:** may mean any problem that has social origins, affecting at least two persons, that goes beyond mere psychological and physiological levels

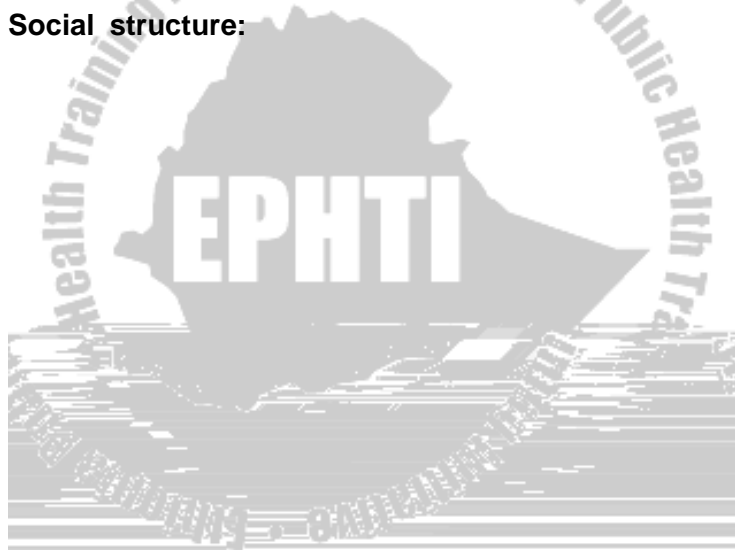
**Social processes:** are certain repetitive, continuous forms of patterns in the social systems that occur as individuals, groups, societies, or countries interact with each other

**Social relationship:** refers to any routinized, enduring patterns of social interactions between individuals in society under the limits and influences of the social structure

**Social roles:** are the expectations, duties, responsibilities, obligations, etc, which are associated with a given social status

**Social stratification:** is the segmentation of society into different hierarchical arrangement or strata. It refers to the differences and inequalities in the socioeconomic life of people in a given society

**Social structure:**





**Socialization:** is a process whereby individual persons learn and are trained in the basic norms, values, beliefs, skills, attitudes, way of doing and acting as appropriate to a specific social group or society.

**Society:** A group people occupying a particular territory and sharing common culture

**Sociological imagination:** is a particular way of looking at the world around us through sociological lenses. It is "a way of looking at our experiences in light of what is going on in the social world around us."

**Sociology:** The scientific study human society.

**Stereotypes:** are the assumptions we have about people; they determine and shape our reactions and behaviors towards people

**Street children:** are those who are born to homeless people or those who come from various parts of the country to urban centers and live in the streets.

**Structural functionalist theory:** The theory that tries to explain how the relationships among the parts of society are created and how these parts are functional (meaning having beneficial consequences to the individual and the society) and dysfunctional (meaning having negative consequences).

**Structural strain theory:** A sociological theory of crime and deviance which maintains that deviance occurs when conformity to widely accepted norms of behavior fails to satisfy legitimate, culturally approved desires.

**Structuralism:** the theory that defines social reality in terms of the relations between events, not in terms of things and social facts. Its basic principle is that the observable is meaningful only in so far as it can be related to an underlying structure or order.

**Subculture:** denotes the variability of culture within a certain society. Sub culture is a distinctive culture that is shared by a group within a society

**Subjective meanings:** the ways in which people interpret their own behavior or the meanings people attach their own behavior.

**Survey method:** a quantitative method of research which involves sampling, impersonal data collections, and sophisticated statistical analysis.

**Symbols:** are words, objects, gestures, sounds or images that represent something else rather than themselves

**Symbolic interactionist perspective:** The theory that stresses the analysis of how our behaviors depend on how we define others and ourselves. It concentrates on process, rather than structure, and keeps the individual actor at the center

**Total institutions:** are an all-encompassing and often isolated from the community, which demand a thorough de-socialization of the new entrants before they assume full-fledged membership.

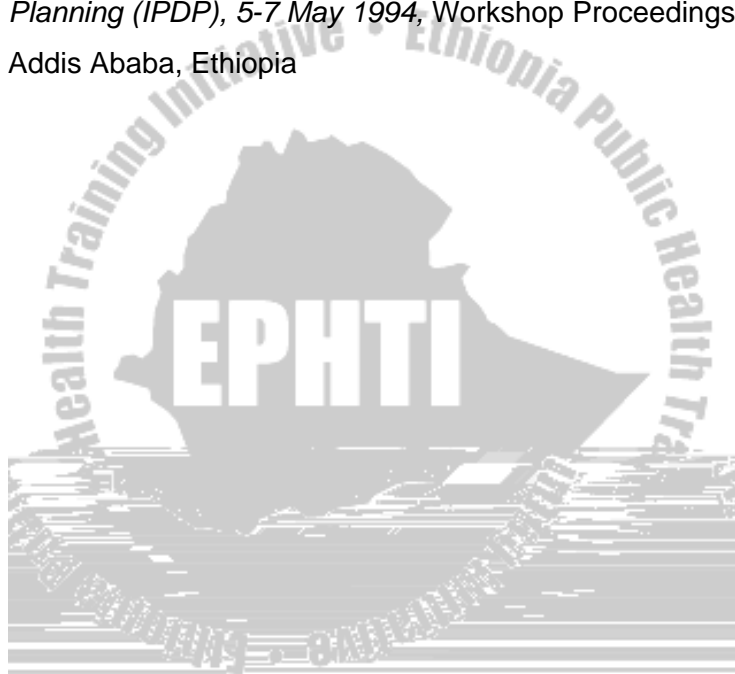
**Unobtrusive Measures:** Observing people's behavior while they are not aware of it. Here, this method involves techniques that do not interfere with the objects or events studied.

**Values:** are essential elements of non-material culture.  
They may be defined as general, abstract



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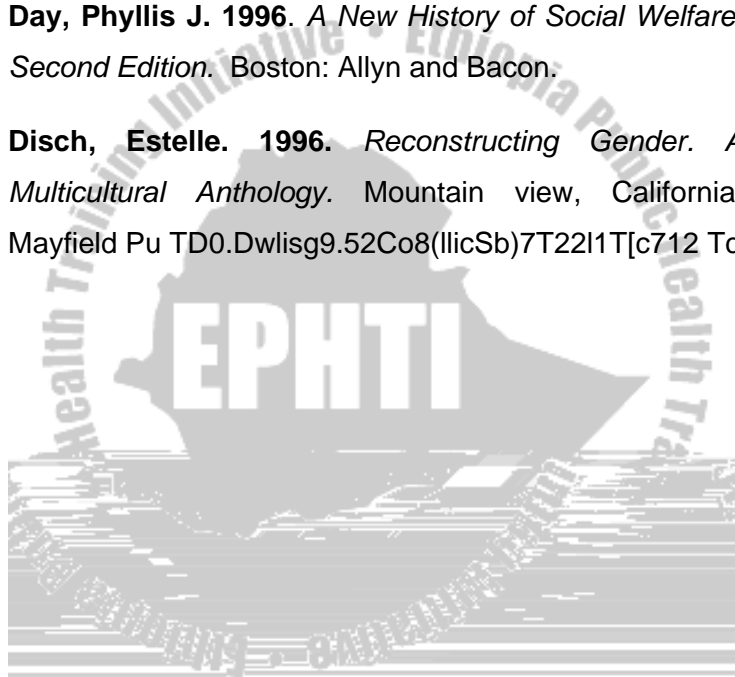


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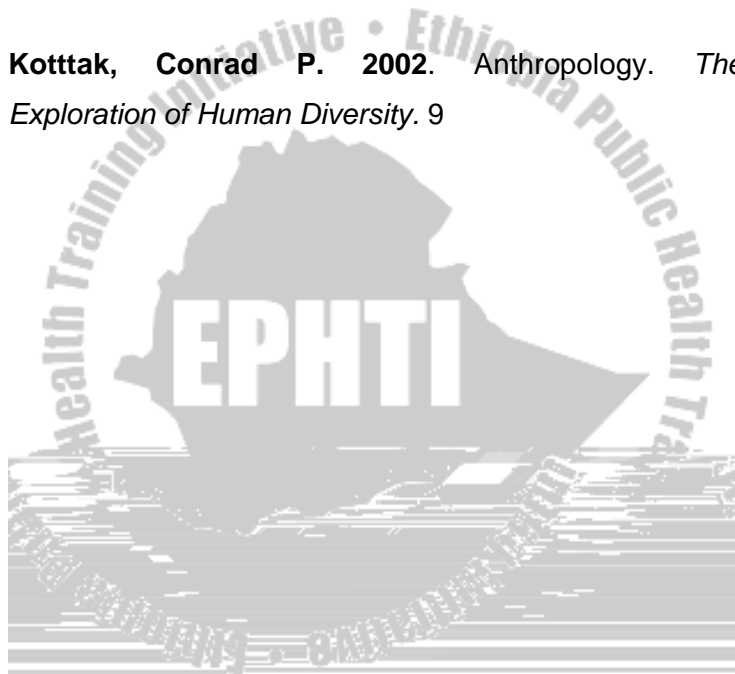
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