

KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Mukthagangothri, Mysuru-570006



**Department of Studies and Research in
Master of Social Works (MSW)**

Course -3

Title : Work with Groups

I Semester



WORK WITH GROUP

BLOCK - 1



KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Mukthagangothri, Mysuru-570006

**Department of Studies and Research in
Master of Social Works (MSW)**

Course -3

Title: Work with Groups

I Semester

BLOCK

1

Page No

**UNIT - 1 : Social Groups - Definition, Characteristics, Functions of
Group, Structure of Groups and Types of Social Groups.**

1-21

UNIT - 1: Social Groups - Definition, Characteristics, Functions of Group, Structure of Groups and Types of Social Groups.

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Quasi groups, social category and social aggregates
- 1.3 Definition
- 1.4 Characteristics of social groups
- 1.5 Function of groups
- 1.6 The structure of groups
- 1.7 Types of social groups
 - 1.7.1 Primary groups
 - 1.7.2 Secondary groups
 - 1.7.3 In-groups and out-groups
 - 1.7.4 Formal and informal groups
- 1.8 Summary
- 1.9 Key words
- 1.10 Answers to check your progress
- 1.11 Self-Assessment Questions & Answers
- 1.12 Reference and Suggested readings

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- grasp what are social groups;
- describe the characteristics of social groups;
- distinguish between social groups and social category, quasi-groups, and social aggregate;
- explain the types of social groups;
- examine the significance of primary groups;
- highlight the differences and similarities between primary and secondary groups;
- elaborate the in-groups and out-groups;
- explicate the formal and informal groups.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have acquired knowledge about the basic concepts of social structure, social functions, social systems, social norms, social values and social sanctions. In the present unit, you will familiarise yourself with the important concept namely social groups. You know very well that man is a social animal and this sociality is derived from the group nature of human society. A human child is born into a group, grows in it, learns with it, lives in the group and dies in the group. Birth and death itself are basically group oriented. It is, therefore, quite obvious that sociologists give pre-eminent place to the study of groups.

Sociology is the science that deals with social groups. A social group is a system of social interaction. When we speak of interaction, it is understood that there are at least two persons who take account of the other, not merely as a physical object, but as an individual with attitudes, expectations and the capacity to pass judgment. The action of each is based on the subjective meaning attached to the situation by the actors involved. Unlike behaviour which involves all activities, action is conscious, involves interpretation and takes the probable reaction of the other into consideration. The action of each person is meaningful to himself, partly on the conscious level and partly on the unconscious level. A part of this meaning to the actor is his continuous assessment of what meaning it is likely to have for the person with whom he is interaction.

Before we understand social group it is necessary to make a distinction between groups and social relationships. To quote Harry M Johnson, "a social relationship exists to the extent that two or more individuals, or two or more groups, or individuals and groups to any number of either, interact with one another." Social relationships may be transitory, tenuous or include such permanent systems of interaction, such as family. The social relationship need not be only cooperative in nature; it may be friendly or unfriendly, cooperate with each other or try to destroy one another. Even the armies who are at war with one another is in social relationship.

Social groups are also in social relationship; but not all social relationships can be called as social groups. A group involves some degree of cooperation among its members for the attainment of common goals. The degree of cooperation may be trivial; and as in a prison, the cooperation may be imposed by the authorities. This does not mean that antagonisms or conflict cannot be seen in a social group. As long as members who are in social relationship cooperate to achieve some common goals, then it can be said that social group exists.

A social group is, then, simply a number of people who interact with each other on a regular basis. It establishes social relationships among social beings. Groups are units of society, having all characteristics of the society, except that the groups are concrete entities. We live in groups such as family and belong to groups like lineage and clan. It is for this reason, sociologists describe sociology as a science of social groups. Persons in all societies are always involved in several forms of interaction. These interactions appear in collectivity as well as these interactions take place between persons having identity linked to the collectivity. These identities play an important role in forming social groups.

1.2 QUASI-GROUPS, SOCIAL CATEGORY AND SOCIAL AGGREGATES

A social group has at least a rudimentary structure and organisation. A family, a village, a trade-union, or a political party is a social group in this sense. A quasi-group, on the other hand, is an aggregate which lacks structure or organisation, and whose members may be unaware of, or less aware of, the existence of the grouping. Some examples for a quasi-group are social classes, status groups, and age and sex groups. It is well to remember that a quasi-group may give rise to organised social groups when a political party emerges or a women's group becomes a feminist association. The sociological concepts of sect and cult are also usually referred to as quasi-groups. This does not mean that quasi-groups are not significant.

Adrian C Mayer, in an influential paper on the significance of quasi-groups, has distinguished between groups and associations. According to him, quasi-groups are more informal sets of group-like relationships which are transitory in nature when compared to our image of the group or the association. He distinguishes two types of quasi-groups. They are,

- First is called as classificatory quasi-groups
- Second is called as interactive quasi-groups

Mayer focuses on interactive quasi-groups that emerge when an individual interacts with others only as ego (separate individual) and not as a member of the group. That is, there are no general relationships between the various members in the quasi-group. This concept has been fruitfully utilised in the study of factions and cliques in the Indian political system.

If a social group is a collection of people who interact with each other and share similar characteristics and a sense of unity, a social category is a collection of people who share similar characteristics but do not interact with one another. For example, women, men, elderly, college students, teachers all constitute social categories. A social category can become a social group when the members in the category interact with each other and identify themselves as members of the group, when women join to form a feminist association or elderly people form an elders' council. In contrast, a social aggregate is a collection of people who are in the same place but who do not interact with each other.

1.3 DEFINITION

Muzafer Sherif formulated a technical definition with the following elements:

A social unit consisting of a number of individuals interacting with each other with respect to:

- Common motives and goals.
- An accepted division of labour, i.e. roles.
- Established status (social rank, dominance) relationships.
- Accepted norms and values with reference to matters relevant to the group.
- Development of accepted sanctions (praise and punishment) if and when norms were respected or violated.

R K Merton defines a group as a number of people who interact with one another in definite ways, feel that they belong to the group and are regarded by others

as members of the group. The first basic characteristic feature of group is the distinctive interaction that occurs among their members. The second basic trait is membership, the feeling of belonging to the group. And finally, people who interact in groups are also seen by others as belonging to a group. The group acquires an identity in the eyes of outsiders.

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL GROUP

Number of Persons: At least two persons have to be there in a group.

Membership Consciousness: Each member is conscious of his or her membership in his or her group.

Organised Structure: Every group is structurally organized.

Social Interaction: Interaction takes place between members with definite meaning and purpose.

Sense of belongingness: There is a 'we' feeling in a group.

Common goals and interests: Members of group often share common goals and work together for their realization. For example, members of a cricket club are bound to each other to play the game of cricket to win a match.

Group norms: Each group has its own rules or norms, which the members are expected to follow.

Comparative enduring character: each group possesses relative permanency.

Nomenclature: Normally each group is known by a name.

Cultural symbols: Each group possesses specific rules of behaviour, specific styles of interaction and language and symbols to communicate. The language itself is a cultural symbol.

Reciprocal relations: The members of a group are reciprocally related to each other. For example, in a family, all the members are bound with each other through the bonds of kinship

1.5 FUNCTIONS OF GROUPS

Every human being is a member of one or more than any one group like family, friends' group, a club, neighbourhood etc. Within each group, human beings interact. Sometimes they have common objects and they participate in similar activities. For example, a political party is one type of group and a cricket team is another type of group. Group activities always follow some rules and norms whose knowledge is

shared by every member. A social group is an entity where one can clearly watch how individuals interact with each other. Members of a group are aware of their activities and they share a common consciousness of their joint interaction.

A social group is a dynamic entity. New members join and old members leave the group, because of birth, death or migration. This naturally changes the composition of the group. A group may also become smaller or bigger depending upon the changing circumstances. Sometimes, the purpose for which a group was formed also gets altered and new changes are brought into the group to allow flexibility. Sometimes, a group is formed for specific purposes, then it becomes an association, but in most cases, its goals remain diffused.

The most basic question about groups is why people form them in the first place. There are many psychological, biological and social issues that need consideration if we want to answer this question. Even among animals like chimpanzees and other complex apes we see group life for the sake of survival- to seek food and defend themselves are only one of the functions performed by a group. Groups also serve many other functions. Some of the important ones are:

The instrumental Role of Groups

Many groups are formed in order to get a specific job done. These instrumental groups are needed to perform tasks that cannot be achieved by a single person. For example, a team of construction workers.

Expression in Groups

Some groups are termed as expressive groups as they satisfy the members' needs for acceptance, esteem and independence. Such groups form spontaneously, perhaps with little outside influence. For example, friendship groups or group of young persons who go out simply to have fun. The boundary between instrumental and expressive groups is very fluid, however. Instrumental groups often perform expressive functions. Sometimes, an expressive group is more clearly instrumental, as in the case of residents' welfare association.

Supportive Role of Groups

Groups get formed not only for performing tasks and meet social needs but also to relieve unpleasant feelings. Schachter studied the psychology of affiliation among undergraduates and concluded that groups relieve their members' negative feelings by providing reassurance, distraction and information. However, later studies have shown that not all negative feelings lead to group formation.

1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF GROUPS

One of the important features of a group is that of patterned interaction. As a set of people become a group, norms and roles emerge to bring order in the way they behave towards each other. By order, it is meant a pattern. Sociologists are interested in understanding how these patterns emerge. One important factor that influences the patterns of interaction is the size of the group. Number of members in a group decides the type of interaction, survival of the group, patterns of domination and submission, decision making and such other things. Some interesting insights were offered by the German sociologist, Georg Simmel.

Dyad

A dyad or group of two has some unique aspects. Examples for a dyad are a pair of lovers or best friends. It is very fragile as even if one member retires, moves out or dies the group breaks down. The members of a dyad cannot think of the existence of the group without thinking of its nonexistence. In a larger group, however, members know that if someone departs from the group, even then the group survives. Since a dyad is fragile, it requires close, regular positive interaction more than any other kind of group. A dyad can provide more emotional gratification than any other kind of group.

Triad

If a new member joins a dyad, then it becomes a triad or group of three. This addition means that the relationship is never neutral. Sooner or later, two of the three members will come together, excluding the third. Georg Simmel identifies three roles, one of which can be assumed by the third member. They are 1. **neutral** mediator, 2. an **opportunist**, who takes advantage of others, and 3. **that of** a tactician, who divides and conquers.

Larger Groups

Increase in the size of groups affects the way interaction that takes place. Studies have shown that larger groups of five to six members are more productive than dyads and triads. The number of suggestions offered increases and though the points of disagreement increase, less tension is observed. Perhaps this is because of the need to solve organisational problems. Members may realise that their behaviour must become more goal-oriented. Larger groups also put more pressure on their members to conform. Since equal participation by all the members is not possible, greater dissatisfaction with one's role is more in a larger group.

Large groups often suffer from low morale and high absenteeism. The members' ties to the group may weaken and they may become unwilling to participate in group activities. In other words, they may not cooperate and strive for harmony. This also leads to a growing gap between the leaders and members and instead of impersonal controls, one-to-one conversation develops; finally the group may develop factions and feuds.

1.7 TYPES OF SOCIAL GROUPS

Social groups can be classified in a variety of ways. The most common and popular typology is that of Ferdinand Tonnies, a German Sociologist. This rests on the character of relation between the members. Tonnies classifies societies into *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Community or *gemeinschaft* is defined as "intimate, private and exclusive living together". A community is an inclusive group with two chief characteristics:

- Within it the individual can have most of the experiences and conduct most of the activities that are important to him;
- It is bound together by a shared sense of belonging and by the feeling among its members that the group defines for them the distinctive identity.

Theoretically, the member of a community lives his whole life within it; he feels a sense of kinship with others who belong to it and he accepts the community as much as he accepts his own name and family membership.

For community, Tonnies gives the examples of family or kin group, the neighbourhood as seen in a rural village and the group of friends.

Association, or *Gessellschaft*, is defined as group life, as something which is consciously and deliberately entered upon. Associations are usually based on limited, utilitarian interests. Tonnies mentions as examples principally those groups which are concerned with economic interests. Special purpose organisations such as trade-unions, corporations and political parties are called associations. In this category are factories, where the main incentive to participation is money income as well as voluntary associations such as clubs.

Another type of classification was provided by Charles Horton Cooley, an American sociologist. He famously distinguished between primary and secondary groups. We can consider them in detail below.

1.7.1 Primary Groups

C H Cooley says that "By primary groups, I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and co-operation. ... it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which we is the *natural* expression". Cooley's definition of primary group involves three conditions, according to Kingsley Davis:

Physical proximity of the members

In order for intimacy to arise it is necessary that people have rather a close contact, and nothing provides such contact better than face-to-face interaction. Eating and living together, playing, travelling, studying together all tend to be regarded as external symbols of close solidarity. Remember the emphasis placed on inter-dining and inter-caste marriage in India. Sometimes these symbols may become formalised as in the handshake of a stranger. Physical proximity thus provides an opportunity for the development of primary groups; however, as K Davis observes, whether or not this opportunity will be utilised depends on the situation as defined in the culture.

In some cases where physical contact is necessary, but not socially prescribed, it is treated in a tolerant but not in an encouraging manner. Physical nearness in a packed bus or railway compartment, a crowded restaurant or a public lavatory may be much greater than recognised that the circumstances make it necessary.

Smallness of the group

A face-to-face group must also be a small group, for it is impossible to be in sensory contact with many people at the same time. The character of the group tends to change with its size. As the group becomes larger each person counts less as a unique personality but more as a unit. Remember the markers like identification number or register number given to students or police constables being called by a number where name of the individual is conveniently brushed aside.

In a small group, the members can know one another personally and can all participate directly in group discussions. They can develop a group character and a group intimacy rather quickly.

Enduring character of the relations

Intimacy is largely a matter of frequency and intensity of association. Other things equal, the longer the group remains together the more numerous and deeper are the contacts between its members. Although the husband and wife may have quarrelled for ten years, the very fact that they have lived together for that long makes it hard for them to do without each other, observes Kingsley Davis.

Various primary groups such as families, soldier groups and factory cliques can be classified together only because they are based to a significant extent on primary relations.

Primary Relations

A primary relationship involves, first of all, an identity of ends between the parties. Among these identical ends, we can also observe those not regarded by the participants as a means to an end but as a good in its own right. This means that the relationship is non-contractual, non-economic, non-political and non-specialised. Instead, it is personal, spontaneous, sentimental and inclusive. A primary relation has the following chief characteristics:

Response is to whole persons rather than to segments

In the primary relation, the participants interact as unique and total individuals. Uniqueness means that response is to a particular person and is non-transferable to others. Wholeness, Broom and Selznick point out, should not be taken literally. It means :

1. One responds to many aspects of another's character and background,
2. One responds spontaneously and freely, as a unified, naturally organised self, permitting true feelings to enter the relationship. The less transferable the response and the more complete the interaction, the more primary is the relation. Entering a primary relation presumes acceptance of a whole person. The relationship between a husband and wife is one such as it is understood to be an unlimited commitment to one another; it is also where each assumes full responsibility for the other's well-being. In contrast, non-primary relations or secondary relations means the only limited responsibility of one individual to the other. Sometimes, secondary relationship may develop into a primary relationship. For example, the relationship between a bank clerk and customer is limited and transferable; however, if this transforms into friendship, then it can be called as a primary relationship.

Communication is deep and extensive

In the primary relation, fewer limits are placed on the range and the mode of communication. In secondary relations, communication is limited to a few areas. In primary relations, communication tends to occur readily both by non-verbal and verbal. Those feelings and needs that are normally hidden in public are revealed. The differences in communication between primary and secondary relations are important

because the expressions of feeling and belief tend to influence the feelings and beliefs of others. Cooley emphasised the importance of the contribution of primary groups to the formation of character as can be seen in the influence of parents on children. Primary relations may contain hostility but it cannot subsist on antagonism. Primary relations mean positive feelings about one another. It is a sense of we-ness, *of belonging* together and sharing a common identity. If there is a lot of antagonism in primary relationship, it leads to frustration of expectations. The hate *may be a distortion of a primary relationship*.

Personal satisfactions are paramount

Individuals enter into primary relations because such relations contribute directly to personal security and well-being. In primary relations, the person is accepted for himself and not merely as a means to some impersonal end.

These chief characteristics of the primary relation may be expected when the quality of "primary-ness" is most fully developed. In the real world, obviously, the quality of primary relations deviate from the ideal and most primary relations are incomplete, even those among friends and lovers. Yet, the identification of ideal situation helps us to diagnose situations in which the incompleteness of the relationship is a source of tension and frustration. Obviously, then there are some theoretical problems that require clarification.

Only those groups that are free from any connection with social organisation can demonstrate completely the characteristics of a primary group. They imply no larger obligation, no fixed status and no involuntary element. For example, two friends may come together for the sake of each other and continue to remain so till one of them loses interest. Even here some rudimentary sense of obligation is inevitable; it is culture that standardises their behaviour as friends. Friendships are meant for lifelong purposes: it was very strong in earlier societies and may have weakened in modern social setting. However, if we take a boy's gang, it is seen that there is a high degree of primary relationship. Similar to friendship, the love relationship between a man and woman has a strong primary character.

K Davis opines that every society is inimical to the full expression of primary association by necessity. If a society intends to control its members, then it has to control primary social relationships. Even in the most personal affairs, it must define mutual obligations. It controls friendship, man-woman relationship. It recognises that voluntary unregulated association as an anarchic force. It can only be friendly in a partial manner to the primary relationships. As we will see in the socialisation

process, the self cannot develop on the basis of secondary contacts: it requires close, intimate and personal contacts.

Hence, concrete groups assume importance in any society. The intricate process of socialisation can occur only in concrete groups such as family and the playgroup. Family is a social institution which is not spontaneous; rights and obligations of its members are predetermined to a large extent; they are not voluntary; it can be said that in reality, primary groups are only partially spontaneous and voluntary groups; they are partially structured because there are certain expectations inherent in the social relationships; the expected mode of behaviour is patterned in such a way that it demands more on the part of participants and the stakes for satisfaction are very high. There is scope for individual decisions about the intensity and depth of involvement within the framework of defined obligations and rights. Even primary groups are organised.

As we saw earlier, society relies heavily on the physical conditions of primary group formation – proximity, smallness and long duration, to lend some of the qualities of primary-ness in a socially organised character. Hence, it can be said that family and neighbourhood provide archetypical examples for organised primary social groups.

The Primary Group and the individual

When Cooley identified primary groups, he called them as nurseries of human nature. As noted earlier, this was because primary groups give social direction to the individual's developing personality. It is the main link between the individual and society. Primary groups make the individuals perform what it wants to like work, fight, restrain oneself, love, etc., as it serves his personal needs. Membership in a primary group gives an individual emotional support which binds her/him to the group and, through it, to the aims of the larger society.

In short, societies recognise the need of the individual for group support and this has often been used as a tool for social control. The extreme form of control based on this need is banishment, commonly known as **bahishkara in the Indian context** wherein the individual or family is denied access to water and fire. In some societies, this technique is regarded as equivalent to capital punishment. In modern societies this extreme form may be seen when a political dissident is isolated from his immediate family; however, if he, along with his family settles in a foreign country, the extent of distress may be less or negligible as he continues to be supported by primary group ties.

Similarly, in the modern societies the aged experience severe distress and depression due to the weakening of primary group ties. The decay has two sources:

- The old person is deprived of companionship as his friends die.
- The limited number of home-centred activities in urban areas provides a weak basis for sustained mutual interests among generations.

This shows that mere membership is not sufficient but the repeated opportunity to validate the membership by participation in activities meaningful to the group is necessary. Even activities that are routine in nature and having little emotional content can help in this regard.

At least three functions of primary group vis-à-vis an individual can be identified. They are:

- In the primary relation, uniqueness counts. The individual recognises that he/she is accepted and wanted for himself/herself. She need not go on proving her worthiness for the membership of the group and she can be herself.
- The individual derives her identity from her primary group membership. For example, an individual named Esha is not so meaningful while as a daughter of Hemamalini, a definite identity is assured. Her continual membership in the group assures that identity.
- Since primary group takes account of the whole person, knowing her and adapting to her many individual characteristics, it can soften the impact of externally imposed rules and regulations. In the words of Broom and Selznick (1977), "The primary group protects the individual by reinterpreting and modifying goals and rules, and by adapting them to the capacities of individuals and to his special personal circumstances."

The large society often must develop rules pertaining to individuals based on average. Groups which know the individual best often intervene to regulate his participation in the community. One of the best examples is a family which can play an important role in the education of a child.

Primary Relations in Formal Structures

Every organisation, irrespective of the size, has both formal and informal relations and formal and informal structures. The formal structure is the official pattern which determines the line of hierarchy, authority and communication within the organisation. These official relations are not the only types that can be seen in an

organisation. Even within the formal structure, whenever individuals relate themselves to each other as persons rather than according to their assigned roles, they initiate primary relations. The universal tendency to initiate primary relations in formal organisations leads to the formation of friendships and cliques.

Why do these primary relations arise? Goals of the organisation are impersonal and individuals become mere tools to attain those goals. However, the members of an organisation are not mere “members”, but persons as well, they feel the need to be treated as unique individuals and not as impersonal cogs in a machine. The most obvious way of escaping impersonality is to make friends with the boss; it can also be achieved by co-operating with others of the same rank. This personal relation may uphold the official pattern and it may also undermine it successfully. They may help to mobilise the participants for the achievement of the prescribed goals or, on the other hand, may have a subversive effect.

1.7.2 Secondary Groups

Secondary groups, very broadly, are just opposite to the primary groups, as we understood earlier. This is also, as we noted, similar to Gessellschaft or association of Tonnies. He used this concept to describe those relationships most likely to be found in the urban areas. These were *impersonal and calculative*, based on the inter-relationship between a segment of a person’s being with that of another person. An example might be the fleeting contact between shopper and sales assistant during the purchase of goods. Such relationships are superficial and based on a lack of knowledge of the respondent’s background and social standing.

- The secondary group covers such a wide area that no two of its members need live in close proximity. In fact, the area is so large that all of its members could not possibly know everyone personally. The membership may be of long duration but personal relations tend to be brief.
- Its characteristics also appear, generally, the opposite extreme of the primary group. It involves relationships that are not ends in themselves, not personal and not inclusive.

The distinction between primary and secondary groups is that of difference, therefore. It is the kind of relationships that constitutes the group structure which brings about the difference. Let us for the sake of example consider a nation. In a nation, its members do not have close, personal warm relations as members. They

may have these relations in other contexts like in a family or village membership, but not simply as citizens of the same nation. Hence it is called as a secondary group.

Roles in a secondary group are specialised in nature. Hence, its members know very little about one another. They don't usually hug and kiss each other. They don't form the emotional ties found among friends or family members. In an organisation designed to do work, relationships are based mainly on efficiency. Hence, even communication becomes specialised. Since face-to-face conversation is inefficient, communication often takes place indirectly, through written messages or phone calls. These types of groups exist to meet specified goals-often a single goal: to produce and sell, to educate students, to enforce laws etc.

Since there are many members, the rules of conduct must become codified in constitutions, by-laws, operating procedures and so on. This is in contrast to the primary groups where the rules of interaction are carried in people's heads. The ties among members of a secondary group are instrumental rather than expressive. By instrumental, it is meant that they exist to carry out the group's goals and expressive means existing to provide emotional gratification.

The nature of secondary contacts is obvious. Even when they are face-to-face, it will be of touch and go variety. Many contacts are entirely indirect, being handled through long-distance communication, the two persons never seeing each other. They are so impersonal that one party may be substituted for another to meet the ends. For example, to take an insurance policy, it does not matter through which agent one buys it unless the agent is somebody who is close to the buyer. In other words, the secondary contact is entered in to in the spirit of rational calculation - in the spirit of technological, economic and political manipulation.

One of the clearest examples of the secondary relationship is that of contract. All secondary contacts are contractual in nature, some more formal and some more informal. In a contract, each of the parties enters into an agreement for a definite purpose; liability is limited. One only puts that much of effort which is in one's own interest and not more. Further, everything is explicitly stated - how much and what each of the parties contributes, the returns to which each one is entitled, for what length of time, under what circumstances and even the duration of contractual relation. Sentiments and motives do not count and in case of disputes, the law only enforces that are laid out in the contract. In short, the contractual relationship is a rational instrument. The interest lies in the goal for which these are the means.

As we noted with respect to primary groups, no group can survive only on secondary relationships or contractual attitudes among its members. A secondary group, no matter how big and impersonal, must be expressed with the primary groups. Membership must be associated in both the secondary and primary contexts; further, there should be structural integration between those two contexts. So every primary group contains some formal organisation (rules about honesty, fairness, mutual love etc.) and every secondary group contains elements of primary relation (at least sentiments, for example). The two kinds of group are symbiotic and interpenetrated.

1.7.3 In-groups and out-groups

In the 1950's two American social psychologists, Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif conducted a classic experiment on two groups of boys. The groups consisted of 12 year old white, middle-class boys at a summer camp and were called as "Eagles" and "Rattlers". The boys were new to each other and at first, they formed a common social category of summer campers. Over a period of time, they started to identify themselves as either Eagles or Rattlers and they formed two distinct social groups. They also erected artificial boundaries between themselves. They formed in-group, **to which loyalty is expressed and out-group to which antagonism is expressed. In the beginning, the Eagles and Rattlers were friendly, but soon intense competition emerged in their games. The two began to call each other names and they raided each others' cabins and started fights. In other words, loyalty to the in-group led to antagonism and aggression toward the out-group, including fierce competition for the same resources. Later in the experiment, Sherif had the boys working together and this cooperation led to less division, hostility and competitiveness.**

This boundary formation is not confined to particular groups but is common to all types of groups.

What differentiates an in-group from out-group? Three characteristic features can be identified as far as a cohesive in-group is concerned. They are:

- Members use titles, external symbols and dress to distinguish themselves from the out-group. Usage of school or factory uniforms, adopting titles like Rotarian, wearing badges of one's Guru is some of the examples. Similarly, the dress, hairstyle etc., of a devout Sikh can be understood.
- Members tend to clash or compete with members of the out-group. This competition with the out-group can also strengthen the unity within each

group. The boundaries between Roman Catholics and Protestants are an example.

- Members apply positive stereotypes to their in-group and negative stereotypes to the out-group. For example, a group, like Indians, may consider itself as very moral, religious and spiritual while all Westerners are immoral, pleasure-loving, this-worldly.

1.7.4 Formal and informal groups

A formal group is one deliberately constructed to achieve specific objectives through explicitly defined roles and specified rules. Modern societies are characterized by the growth of such organizations and the reduction of primary groups. These are more like secondary groups that we understood above. Informal groups are more primary in nature, and characteristic features of primary relations are pronounced in the informal groups. An informal group is a group of people casually acquainted with each other for their own personal fulfillment because they have some common characteristics and concerns (interests/hobbies/friendship).

Formal Groups

Formal groups are those groups set up by the management of an organization to undertake duties in the pursuit of organizational goals.

- They are created to fulfil specific goals or undertake specific tasks.
- They have a formal status and role conferred by the organisation.
- They have definite structures with prescribed leadership and established rules, processes and roles.
- They tend to be permanent.

Informal Groups

Informal groups are those grouping which the members themselves have developed in accordance with their own needs. Every organisation has this kind of groups. Researchers say these are very important to organisation's effectiveness.

- They are created by the individual members for the purpose of sharing a common interest or meeting a shared need.
- They emerge from organisational interactions and may be contained within formal task groups.
- They exist as long as they serve a common interest or fulfil a common need.

- Communication tends to be flexible and rapid and within and between groups is known as the grapevine or gossip.

Check your progress

1. Name the functions performed by groups.
2. How did Tonnie's differentiate between groups?
3. A social group is a system of _____
4. Societies are _____ entities while groups are _____ entities

1.8 SUMMARY

A human child becomes an individual due to the group in which it is born and the culture it learns there. The natural life cycle of a human being is such that a child cannot survive for long if there is no group to look after it and this dependency on the group continues for a very long time unlike any other animal. It is well to remember that for a group to form it requires at the least two persons. A child is, normally, born and brought up in a group (primary group) and later in the life gets connected to various other type of groups (secondary groups). Since the group is basically made up of social relationships, it has, we learnt that, a structure and they also perform certain functions. Based on the type of relationships, the groups can also be classified as formal or informal or in and out groups. Finally, it is important to remember that man is born in to a group, lives in groups and also dies in a group.

1.9 KEY WORDS

Group: A number of people who interact with one another in definite ways, feel that they belong to the group and are regarded by others as members of the group.

Gemeinschaft: Toennies' term for relations characteristic of rural areas; community.

Gesellschaft: Tonnie's' term for relations characteristic of urban industrial society, which is based on the pursuit of self-interest; association.

Primary group: A small number of people who interact directly in relationships that involve many aspects of their personalities and who are bound together by strong emotional ties.

Secondary group: A number of people who have few emotional ties and interact in order to achieve specified goals.

Instrumental group: A group that has been formed in order to get a specific job done.

Quasi-groups: A quasi-group is an aggregate which lacks structure or organisation, and whose members may be unaware of, or less aware of, the existence of the grouping.

Social category: A social category is a collection of people who share similar characteristics but do not interact with one another.

Social aggregate: A social aggregate is a collection of people who are in the same place but who do not interact with each other.

1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress

1. Instrumental, expressive and supportive
2. Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft
3. Social interaction
4. Abstract, concrete

1.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Define social groups.
2. Differentiate between quasi-groups, social aggregates, social categories.
3. What are the characteristics of social groups?
4. Briefly, explain the functions of social groups.
5. How do primary groups differ from secondary groups? Explain with examples.
6. Write a note on in-groups and out-groups.

Answers

- | | | |
|--------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. 9.1 | 2. 9.2 | 3. 9.4 |
| 4. 9.5 | 5. 9.7.1 and 9.7.2 | 6. 9.7.3 |

1.12 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Bottomore T B. 1966. *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature*, London: Unwin.
2. Broom and Selznick. 1977. *Sociology: A Text with adapted Readings*, New York: Harper and Row.
3. Giddens, Anthony J. 2009. *Sociology*, New Delhi: Wiley India Edition, 6th edition.
4. Harlambos, M. 1980. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, Bombay: Oxford University Press.

5. Johnson, Harry M. 1966. *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*, Bombay: Allied Publishers Limited.
6. Merton, R K. 1968. *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York: Free Press.
7. Smelser, Niel J. 1993. *Sociology*, New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Pvt Limited, 4th Edition.

Dr. Soumya Kumar