

Social Institutions

I. Introduction

Social institution is the social structure & machinery through which human society organizes, directs & executes the multifarious activities required to society for human need. Every institution in order for its functions to be performed has a division of labor among its participants. Among the many norms linked together to make up the institutions are those defining the various roles necessary to the performance of the institutions function. Social institutions have been created by man from social relationships in society to meet such basic needs as stability, law and order and clearly defined roles of authority and decision making. Every organization is dependent upon certain recognized and established set of rules, traditions and usages. These usages and rules may be given the name of institutions. These are the forms of procedure which are recognized and accepted by society and govern the relations between individuals and groups

II. Definitions of Social Institutions

- 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 Institutions* are organized patterns of beliefs and behavior that are centered on basic social needs.
- *Wood ward and Maxwell:* An institution is a set of folkways and mores into a unit which serves a number of social functions.
- *Horton:* An institution is an organized system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures and meets certain basic needs of society.
- *Landis:* Social institutions are formal cultural structures devised to meet basic social needs

III. Characteristics of Social Institutions

- Institutions are the means of controlling individuals.
- Institutions depend upon the collective activities of men.
- The institution has some definite procedures which are formed on the basis of customs and dogmas.
- Institution is more stable than other means of social control.
- Every institution has some rules which must be compulsorily obeyed by the individual.

IV. Major Institutions in Rural Sociology

1. Political: Government as political institution, administers the regulatory functions of Law and order, and maintains security in society. Form of government and its method of working depends on the accepted patterns of behavior in a society. Development work is now-a-days a major responsibility of the government. For effective implementation of programmes, government may decentralize its functioning by creating local self-government like panchayats at different level.

2. Education: is the process of socialization, which begins informally at home and then formally in educational institutions. Education as an institution helps develop knowledge, skill, attitude and understanding of the people and strive to make them competent members of the society. Education widens the mental horizon of the people and make them receptive to new ideas.

3. **Economic:** Economy provides basic physical sustenance of the society by meeting the needs for food, shelter, clothing, and other necessary supply and services. Economic institutions include agriculture, industry, marketing, credit and banking system, co-operatives etc.

4. **Family:** is the most basic social institution in a society, and is a system of organized relationship involving workable and dependable ways of meeting basic social needs.

5. **Religion:** is belief in supernatural. Religion constitutes a set of beliefs regarding the ultimate power in the universe, the ideal and proper pattern of behavior, and ceremonial ways to expressing these beliefs. Religion also provides a foundation for the mores of the society. Taboos in various cultures have religious sanction. Religion provides a means by which individuals can face crises and ups and downs in life with strength and fortitude.

V. Function of Social Institutions

1. Sex regulation.
2. Reproduction and perpetuation of the family and human race.
3. Socialization
4. Provision of economic maintenance and livelihood in many cultures.
5. Provision of love, affection and security to the individual.
6. Provision of class status to the individual of the family into which he has been born.

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VI. Elements of Social Institutions

- A group of people
- United by common interest
- Having material resources
- Having norms
- Fulfill some social need.

References

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