

1) Describe the nature of folkways. Use about five lines.

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2) Give an example of folkway and mores of society to make a distinction between the two. Use about six lines.

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3) Tick the correct answer.

- i) While customs and institutions are social norms the fashions are not. Yes No
- ii) People conform to the customs of their society because otherwise they will have problems with the police. Yes No
- iii) Customs are seldom coded or written down by the people who are governed by them. Yes No
- iv) Marriage is an institution found in most societies. Yes No

24.4 THE FUNCTION OF NORMS IN SOCIALISATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Socialisation refers to the processes through which human infants develop into social beings. Socialisation inevitably involves the internalisation of the social norms of the group to which the individual belongs. In other word, social norms become a part of the personality of the individual through the process of socialisation.

Thus an adequately socialised individual does not look upon social norms of his or her community as outside objects that hinder him or her. On the other hand one believes them to be right and proper, and tends even to think that one is acting according to the dictates of one’s own conscience when one conforms to the norms and values of one’s society.

By social control we mean the way in which the social order is organised and sustained. In the process of social control, norms play the most crucial part for it is norms that regulate social behaviour. And without such regulation no stable patterning of social relationship is possible. Thus social groups; which embody distinctive patterns of social relationships, cannot survive. The maintenance of social organisation is unthinkable without the operation of norms.

24.4.1 Deviance

Norms provide the standards for the control of behaviour of individuals towards each other, and in relation to various groups and the community as a whole. This does not mean, however, that there is absolute conformity to social norms by all the members of a society at any time. Deviance from norms does exist, and there are a variety of reasons for deviance which merit serious study in terms of general theory and also with reference to particular societies. Such study would inevitably imply better understanding of the nature and functioning of social norms.

24.4.2 Anomie

Anomie literally means the lack of norms or normlessness. But the situation of complete normlessness seldom exists. Sometimes there is lack of clarity about norms. But the term anomie is more frequently used to indicate ambivalent orientation towards norms. R.K. Merton has explained anomie in terms of the gap between culturally defined goals and the legitimate means to reach them.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How does a person conform to the social norms of his/her society. Describe in about five lines.

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2) What is anomie? How does R.K. Merton describe anomie? Use about two lines.

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3) Tick the correct answer.

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| i) | When social change occurs very fast, it leads to change of values at a fast pace giving rise to conflict of norms | Yes | No |
| ii) | Norms of all societies are the same. | Yes | No |

24.5 LET US SUM UP

You have learnt in this unit about the nature of social norms. You have also learnt about the kindred concepts and types of norms like the folkways and mores. Integration and conflicts of norms have also been explained. In this unit the function of norms in the process of socialisation and social control has been discussed. We have described the problem of deviance and anomie in society. Finally, diversity of norms in different cultures has also been discussed.

24.6 KEY WORDS

Ethnocentrism	: The attitude that one's own group is superior.
Fundamental	: Anything which forms the basis or the crux of a system or organisation.
Gemeinschaft	: Strong reciprocal bonds or sentiment and kinship within a common tradition.
Gesellschaft	: Impersonally contracted association between persons.
Kindred	: Any concept which is related to the given concept or similar to it.
Oppressive	: Any custom which is coercive in nature.
Penalties	: Disadvantages imposed on a person or persons for breaking any rule or norm.
Prohibitive Norms	: Any norm which stops a person from doing some thing. For example, touching one's husband's elder brother, in some parts of India is prohibited.
Regulate	: An action which leads to establishment of order.
Sanction	: Approval given to an action etc., by custom or tradition.

24.7 FURTHER READINGS

Bell, Earl H., 1961. *Social Foundations of Human Behaviour*. Harper : New York.

Broom, Leonard and Philip Selznick, 1963. *Sociology : A Text With Adapted Readings*. Harper and Row : New York.

Sumner, W.G., 1906. *Folkways*. Ginn & Co. : Boston.

Young, Kimball and Raymond, W. Mack, 1972. *Systematic Sociology : Text and Readings*. Affiliated East-West Press : New Delhi.

24.8 MODEL ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Social norms are standards of behaviour shared by the members of a social group, to which they are expected to conform. The word "norm" is derived from the Latin "**norma**" which is a carpenter's square or rule. Thus, social norms refer to accepted and required behaviour for a person or a group in a particular setting. They are rules for social living.
- 2)
 - i) Yes (See section 24.2)
 - ii) No (See section 24.2.1)

iii) No (See section 24.2.2)

iv) No (See section 24.2.2)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Folkways are described as products of natural forces which people unconsciously set in operation. These products of natural forces reach a final form of maximum adaptation to an interest which is then handed down from one generation to another by tradition. These folkways do not vary much from one period to another. Yet, they do shape themselves to meet new conditions within a certain limit.
- 2) In India to touch the feet of one's elders is a folkway but if a person refuses to do that, he or she is not thrown out of the community. One of the mores of Hindu society is not to eat beef and even now if a Hindu in a village eats beef, he will be excommunicated from his community. Therefore, to refuse to conform to a folkway is easy but to refuse to conform to a mores of one's society is very difficult.
- 3)
 - i) No (See section 24.3.2)
 - ii) No
 - iii) Yes (See section 24.3.2)
 - iv) Yes (See section 24.3.2)

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) A person conforms to the social norms of his or her society through the process of internalisation of these norms. This internalisation takes place through the process of socialisation of a person from early childhood to adulthood status. They become part of a person and his or her habit. They are also associated with rewards and punishments according to the nature of the norms.
- 2) Anomie literally means the lack of norms. Merton has described anomie as the gap between culturally required goals and the legitimate means to reach them.
- 3)
 - i) Yes (See section 24.3.3)
 - ii) No (See section 24.3.4)

REFERENCES

References cited in Block VI (These are given here for those students who wish to follow certain points in detail.)

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