UNIT 23   VALUES

Structure

23.0   OBJECTIVES

On studying this unit you should be able to:

● describe what values are;

● distinguish between values and norms;

● explain how values integrate personalities and cultures; and

● discuss how they change from time to time in the same society.

23.1   INTRODUCTION

By now you are familiar with the fact that cultures differ from one another and a person belonging to the same culture behaves more or less in the same way. Underlying such differentiation and similarities are values and norms. In this unit you will learn about the meaning of values and how values can be distinguished from

norms. You will also learn about the role of values in the personality formation and the socio-cultural system. In this unit we have discussed the process in which values change within a society from one period to another. As an example we have discussed the change of values in Indian society from the Vedic period to the modern times.

23.2 VALUES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

It is not easy to define social values. Like most terms employed in the social sciences, the term value too has been taken from common parlance. And in common parlance the same word is used by various people in a number of different senses. However, when we use a word in scientific discussion, we should do our best to make its meaning as precise and well-defined as possible. Otherwise statements would become loose, and discussions are likely to be confusing. Unless crucial terms are properly defined, it would be difficult to make headway in understanding and analysis and in furtherance of knowledge through research work.

23.2.1 Definition of Values

Broadly speaking, values are conceptions of the desirable, which influence selective behaviour. Values may be defined as the criteria and moral judgement or certain subjective standards through which individuals or groups distinguish between good or bad, true or false and between ought to be or not to be etc. It shapes individual personality, social morality and guides individuals to be a part of or function within distinctive socio-cultural system.

23.2.2 Nature of Values

Values are the generally accepted basic assumptions about what is right and important. They define the purposes of life and the means of achieving them. According to International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (ISSS: 1968) all "purposive actions fall within the boundaries of evaluative action. Within purposive actions we can identify three main kinds of value: conative (desire, liking), achievement (success versus frustration), and affective (pleasure versus pain or unpleasantness)".

Some writers take such view of this concept that for them anything good or bad is a value, or a value is anything of interest to a human subject. However, it seems inappropriate to extend the meaning to the terms so widely as to make it meaningless.

Activity 1

In what ways do you think values are changing in society today? Observe different relationships, such as, between father and son, daughter and mother, teacher and the taught in you family/community. Write an essay of two pages on "The changing Values in My Society."

Discuss your essay with other students and your Academic Counsellor at your Study Centre.

23.3 DISTINCTION BETWEEN VALUES AND NORMS

Values and norms are deeply related to each other; both are concerned with accepted assumptions about what is considered to be right or wrong, or desirable or undesirable. Values constitute the basis of norms. Norms depend upon values and are justified through standards of "true", "good" and "beautiful".

Relatively speaking, values are more general and abstract then norms. Norms are relatively more specific: they refer to sets of expected behaviour associated with a particular situation or with a given position in the social order. Widely shared values such as truthfulness, loyalty or respect for elders find expression through (relatively) concrete norms which vary with different situations; strata and professions.

Values : Touching the Fect of Elders

Norms themselves are sometimes evaluated. Behaviour conforming to two different norms (both of which may be acceptable) may be regarded as better or worse in terms of values which are more fundamental.

Norms provide specific rules about what should be done or should not be done by various kinds of actors in particular situations. On the other hand values are abstract standards of desirability, so that they are relatively independent of specific situation.

Since values are more general, the same value may be embedded in a wide variety of norms. For instance, the values of respect and obedience to superiors underline various sets of norms related to widely different institutions such as the family, military, schools, and administrative, political or religious organisation.

On the other hand, it is not unusual for a particular norm to embody simultaneously a number of separable values. For example, the norms which forbid cheating in an examination are based on several values such as those of honesty, achievement, equality of opportunity and pursuit of knowledge.

Apart from the differences in the levels of generality and specificity, another useful basis of distinction exists between values and norms.

This is the field of value inquiry which refers to attitudinal directives like choice preference, likes and dislikes while the field of normative inquiry refers to those attitudinal directives which consist of obligations and prescriptions. We can also define values as the preferred mode of orientation to specified categories of human experience. The characteristics of norms can be best explained in comparison with categories of values. Therefore, since values involve preferences whereas norms

involve prescriptions, there are higher degrees of freedom and more room for deviance in the realm of value orientation.

Values provide standards for judging a wide variety of aspects of socio-cultural life: actions, goals, means, ideas, attitudes, qualities, objects, persons and groups.

Dominant values have been found to involve (i) extensiveness, (ii) persistence (duration), (iii) intensity (iv) prestige of value carriers.

Check Your Progress 1

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

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

1)   Define values and describe its nature. Use about five lines.

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2)   How are values different from norms? Give an example. Use about five lines.

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23.4   VALUES IN PERSONALITY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEMS

Values play an important part in the integration of the personality and the socio-cultural systems. They serve as the means of forestalling, resolving or minimising conflict both at the level of personality and that of the system of social interaction.

23.4.1   Human Being As a Value-creating and Value-fulfilling Animal

As Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960: 10), whose contribution to the study of values is widely recognised, points out that human beings create values and also fulfil them. This particular ability affects both the formation of personality and the formation of groups and institutions in society. In this sense human beings are not only the source of values but also those who judge the behaviour involved in day to day functioning of society.

A difference is sometimes drawn between personal and social values. However, even those values which are regarded as personal, are largely acquired by the individual from the society, or a segment of it, to which he/she belongs. A human infant is hardly a social being or person at the time of its birth, though it does possess

the potentiality to become one. It is through the process of socialisation that it becomes a social being or a person. Internalisation of the values of the group is an integral and important part of this process of socialisation.

23.4.2 Hierarchy of Values

A person does not attach equal importance to all his or her values. There is a hierarchy of values. In a situation of competing claims, the lower values must yield to the higher one. Thus, when the examinations are close, a student would rather study than go to see a movie. Undoubtedly, in many situations the individual is faced with a conflict of values. But these conflicts are resolved or kept to a minimum through the hierarchical ordering of values. In the absence of such hierarchy of values, the integration of an individual's personality is likely to be seriously threatened, and his actions may become chaotic.

A socio-cultural system too is integrated through a degree of coherence among its diverse values and the general consensus about their hierarchical ordering. According to Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960: 13) the values pertaining to various aspects of life, such as economic, political, moral or religious, form a network. The values of all social groups and institutions like political, economic, religious, etc., also affect each other in the process of interaction and they overlap with each other.

23.4.3 Values as Core of Culture - Personality

Sets of values form the core and ethos of every culture. People belonging to a culture, however, are often not conscious of many of the values, for, values are internalised and become a part of their personality. Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960 : 13) says that a normal person is one who successfully obtains a balance between the various conflicting values and goals faced in life. When a person is unable to resolve the value conflicts it leads to severe mental strain and imbalance in his or her personality. Therefore, he considers that in all normal human beings the person should be a "whole" person just as a normal society is that which is an integrated whole.

23.4.4 Values and Environment

Values also reflect a society's adjustment to environment. Those activities and objects which promote adjustment are assigned a higher value. For example, the tribals who are dependent on hunting and gathering assign high degree of value to their bows and arrows and to the preservation of the forest as well. Indeed different aspects of life and spheres of activity have different kinds of value.

Check Your Progress 2

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 is a human being a value-creating and a value-fulfilling animal? Describe in about four lines.

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2)   In what way people resolve conflicts of values in their daily life? Use about five lines.

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3)   Tick the correct answer.

i)   Social values and personal values are both acquired
      by the individual from its society.   Yes   No

ii)   Hierarchy of values leads to conflict of values
      in an individual's personality.   Yes   No

iii) Values have much to do with the environment and
      culture of a society.   Yes   No

23.5   CHANGE IN SYSTEMS OF VALUES IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Though systems of values are quite stable and tenacious, they do undergo basic changes in course of time. Values are strongly bound to other aspects of the social system to which they belong; and change in the value system goes hand in hand with changes in the social system as a whole. Whether it is the change in the value system that causes social change, that is, the change of the social system; or it is some other factors which bring about basic social change, including a change in the value systems - is a question on which opinion is sharply divided. Let us have a glimpse of the change in the system of values of the civilisation to which we ourselves belong.

It is customary to talk of "Indian Values" in a way as if all sections of Indian people share the very same values in all historical eras. This is obviously not so. Besides variations in the value systems of the people of different strata and other segments of Indian society, the values of the dominant elites themselves have undergone tremendous changes over various socio-cultural eras, about which we have ample evidence from textual and other sources.

Since socio-cultural systems are wholes, attempts to study particular values in isolation from the dynamics of the system as a whole tend to remain superficial. Sometimes they are even misleading. This is all the more true in the case of traditional socio-cultural systems, such as that of India, which have grown over long periods of time; when their structural and cultural elements have developed a high degree of consistency. We shall therefore view the changes in the Indian value system in the perspective of the dynamics of the traditional socio-cultural system as a whole from the Rigvedic times onwards. This would illustrate how the systematic values of a civilisation which has maintained remarkable continuity have undergone numerous changes in the course of time.

23.5.1   Values in the Vedic Period

Rigveda, the earliest literary source, provides us a good deal of information about the people who migrated and settled in India around 1500 B.C.

It tells us that the militant Aryans destroyed ninety nine cities and overpowered their inhabitants, who are referred as "dasa". After the victory, the following pattern appears to emerge.

i)   **Conflict of Values Between the Conquerors and the Vanquished**

The vanquished people are referred to as **dasa** (slave) and **pani.** The **pani** are portrayed as wealthy traders. The cattle wealth of the **pani** was a great attraction for the Aryan. Being traders the **pani** did not want to part with their cows and other wealth without compensation. The tendency of **pani** to expect something in exchange for everything that they gave, appeared absurd to the semi-nomadic Aryan.

Such a clash of race and culture between the Aryan and the non-Aryan contributed, in a myriad subtle ways, to the shaping of the Indian traditions of culture and patterns of values. The varna stratification, the distinctiveness of the elite and the folk streams of culture, and the double standards that prevail in the sacred and the secular law - all these owe a good deal to this clash, and the consequent patterns of adjustment that came into being .

ii)   **Duality of Norms and Values**

The hatred towards the racially distinct subjugated people found expression in social values and norms. In Rigveda, we find two sets of norms, one for the Aryan and the other for the non-Aryan. The poet, Samvanana, exhorts Aryans to live together in a spirit of harmony and unity. He says, "May you go together, speak together, may your minds know together just as the gods of earlier times take their portions together". But none of the poets of Rigveda ever expressed the desirability of the Aryan living peacefully with the dasa.

It would appear thus that the foundations of the valuational patterns that have persisted till the present day were laid long ago, perhaps in the Vedic era itself. The facts briefly mentioned above indicate how the Aryan priests and warriors had begun to look upon the non-Aryan traders (Pani) as a perennial source of wealth for extortion and the dasa as the people whose only duty was to serve the Aryan master. The elaborate legal system found in the Smriti, which prescribes different codes of conduct, privilege and penalties for persons of different Varna. This also has its roots in the double standards of morality and law for the Aryan and the non-Aryan laid down in the Veda.

However, after the Aryan settled down in the Indo-Gangetic plains and established a working relationship with the pre-Aryan people, their militant spirit declined. They took over many non-Aryan values and beliefs. Conflicts within the Aryan elites also began to take shape. Through the Brahmana Grantha, the priestly Brahmana asserted their superiority over the Kshatriya who were kings and warriors. Many elaborate and expensive *yajna* were prescribed for which the Kshatriya had to pay. The Kshatriya revolted against this dispensation. Their protest found expression in the Upanishad.

23.5.2   Values in the Post-Vedic Period

In the Upanishad, the knowledge of the Self is considered the ultimate aim of life. Persons from all walks of life participated and made contribution to it. The language of Upanishad was easy to understand and therefore attracted people. People belonging even to the younger generation of the priestly elite had lost their interest in the intricate sacrifice and rituals. This wave gave a strong blow to the supreme position of the priestly elites as well as to the Varna hierarchy.

It appears that by the time of the Upanishadic era, the notion of racial purity was compromised to such an extent that it became a part of the ritual purity. Thus for getting formal entry into the community, it was made obligatory for each child to undergo certain sacraments or Sanskara. From conception to death, these sacraments are to be performed to mark the turning points in a person's life.

It seems that in all traditional societies, whenever the elites want to get rid of the immediate past, they try to revive the ancient past. Due to the long interval of time, a complete revival of the bygone age is never possible. Usually what is revived is only some outer form of the ancient past. During the Upanishadic era the values of Varna-hierarchy lost their hold. The lower castes, women and the younger generation of elites revolted against the traditional social order. During this era many popular non-Aryan values got entry into the elite stream. The stronghold of the priestly elites loosened to such an extent that even the priests had to get acquainted with the newly emerging metaphysical ideas.

23.5.3   Values in the Buddhist Period

The social values sought to be re-established in the Post-Vedic period were challenged again by Buddhism. The impact of Buddhism was very great. Unlike Brahmanical elites, Buddha preached in the common man's language. He preached equality of all human beings. The Brahmanical lore was in Sanskrit. It was the preserve of the elite only. Buddha's teachings were open to all castes. Buddha attacked the great Vedic sacrifices and declared them wasteful and futile. Buddhism became popular among rulers, well-to-do merchants, artisans and peasants.

The value of equality among castes and the stress on hard work and frugality propagated by Buddhism, promoted industrial and business activity. People made remarkable progress in trade and industry during this era. Many industries and crafts are mentioned in Buddhist literature. The Jataka mentions eighteen types of guilds of artisans and workers. They are mentioned as **sheni** or **puga** (**seni** and **puga** in Sanskrit). The royal court recognised these guilds. There used to be a head craftsman in each guild. He is called **Jethaka** or **pamukha** (**jyeshtha** or **pramukha** in Sanskrit). He was an important member of the royal court. Gradually there developed a prosperous commercial class.

Buddhism disturbed the caste hierarchy and the division of society entirely on the basis of birth. The racial factor which was the basis of colour doctrine got another jolt from foreign hordes who continually came to India. They fulfilled very well the criteria of white complexion and blond hair propounded by Patanjali as the physical qualities of a Brahmana.

23.5.4   Manusmriti: Veda of the Brahmanical Revival

Therefore in order to maintain the uniqueness of the Brahman the criteria of racial purity had to be replaced by ritual purity. The Brahman too had lost their racial purity to some extent, despite theoretically emphasising the colour/doctrine. Still another threat was from the pre-Aryan darker people who were at the lower rungs of the social hierarchy. They constituted the majority in the society. Their norms and culture were basically different from the Aryan.

In order to survive, the priestly elites had to meet all these challenges, and at the same time revive the flickering Brahmanical tradition. In this period of crisis Manusmriti, the Veda of the Brahmanical revival, appeared on the horizon. Unlike the Sutra of the Post-Vedic period which were recognised to be creations of human being, Smriti were presented as the dictates of mythical seers. It is indeed appropriate

to attribute the Manusmriti, the grand treatise of revivalist era, to Manu, the primeval father, since work really laid the foundations of the social and moral order supposed to be based on Vedic tradition.

23.5.5 Values in the Islamic Period

Impact of Islam in India can be traced back to the Arab conquest of the Sind in the beginning of the eighth century. The Muslim, population in India was sixty million in 1973. In 1991 (Census 1991) the population of Muslim in India was about 101 million which is about 12.1% of total population of India. Historically and sociologically speaking Islamic values play a very important role in the cultural tradition of India.

When we talk about the values in the Vedic period, in the Upanishadic period, and so on, we are basically talking about the Hindu Great tradition. In contrast, the Islamic Great tradition is founded on a world-view which more or less "is non-hierarchical, is purely monotheistic, and messianic-historical in ethos" (Singh 1973 : 68). It is non-hierarchical in the sense that according to Islam all men are equal in the eyes of God, unlike the Hindu tradition. In the Hindu tradition, as Manu has accorded, the Brahmin are at the top; the Kshatriya are next to them, followed by the Vaishya and at the lowest rung are the Sudra.

Islam is monotheistic in the sense that its people believe in the existence of one supreme God, unlike Hinduism where multitude of Gods and Goddesses are worshiped. It is messianic-historical in ethos because its origin is traced to the time of Abrahim, or Ibrahim. From the sons of Abrahim the three religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are traced. It believes in the notion of messiah who will redeem the world and that there will be the day of judgement when the world ends.

Islamic values, like Hindu values, or for that matter any other values, have not remained constant. There has been a lot of intermixture between Hinduism and Islam. Sufism, a sect of Muslim religious mystics, has the elements of 'bhakti' of Hinduism. Similarly, Sikh religion has values of both the great traditions, Hindu, as well as Islam. Because of a long period of socio-cultural interaction the Muslim population of India had elements which are not present amongst the Muslims of other countries. They have caste-like structures in their society. Certain customs are also borrowed from the Hindu population. Similarly, the Hindu communities have borrowed the custom of 'purdah' or veil in North India from the Muslims.

23.5.6 The Modern Value System

The traditional value system of India, which formed the basis of its social structure and institutions for more than fifteen hundred years, began to show signs of rapid change and decline as a result of the impact of modern social forces. These forces were brought about, for the most part, by the British rule. The change did not come merely because the rulers were foreigners. It came about primarily because the British represented a radically different type of society - the modern, industrial-capitalist society in all its economic-technical, political-legal, and cultural-ideological dimensions. Moreover, the industrial-capitalist civilisation is an expanding one. It cannot leave the traditional societies to continue as they have been. Because of its own dynamics, it tends to bring about structural and valuational changes in the traditional societies.

i) The British Rule and Indian Value System

The impact of the British rule on the Indian society gave birth to an urban middle class which had values that were not only different but even opposed to the traditional values. It became imbued with the values of modern capitalist society such as

individualism, rationality, competitiveness, acquisitiveness, and activeness. This was a far cry from the unified life of the traditional society where the values of co-operation and contentment prevail. In India the concept of individualism never existed, except in the case of the 'sanyasi' otherwise family group was the basic unit of society to which every person belonged.

Impact of the British rule also opened the channels of communication between the Indian elites and the Western society. The English language became the window through which, the Indians could view the changes in Western society. They imbibed the values of freedom. The notions of equality, liberty and fraternity came to be understood and internalised by them. Notion of democracy and self-rule or swaraj became a popular ambition for our leaders during the national movement for freedom in India. In fact, we can see the impact of western values on our national leaders such as, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekanand, Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore.

ii) Impact of Modern Values on Indian Villages

Modern values did not remain confined to the cities. Modern forces brought about a basic transformation in the relationship between urban centres and the villages; and thus the life and values in the countryside also began to change. It was not that because of the new means of transport and communication, peasant villages were connected with transport and communication, for the first time. In peasant civilisations villages are always related with towns. Unless a stable relationship existed between the villages and the towns the latter could not have survived as they did not produce such essential things as food and cotton. The fact is that a certain kind of relationship always existed between the villages and the towns belonging to the peasant civilisation; but the modern economic, technological, political and cultural factors have brought about a qualitative change in the nature of this relationship, thereby beginning a process of transformation of the village life itself.

In the traditional peasant civilisations, towns thrive on the revenue collected from the villages. Apart from getting such surpluses from the villages, the towns people are not interested in transforming the countryside or in manipulating its life in any way. This picture changes dramatically when towns become centres of commerce and industry. Now the towns people make an all out effort to sell the mass-produced goods in the country side, and to acquire cheap labour and raw material from there.

This has important consequences for the traditional way of life in the villages. The village industries decline, and together with mass-produced commodities which are pumped into the villages, modern attitudes and values also invade the rural areas. The production in the villages also is motivated more and more by the desire for earning the maximum profit, rather than primarily fulfilling one's requirements. Together, with this, the values of individualism, competition, and unlimited acquisitiveness also has gathered strength.

Activity 2

Are the values of idealism, patriotism, humanism still important to us in India or the values of "Money mindedness" or achievement oriented behaviour along with consumption orientation become important to us? Comment on this in about one page and share your views with other students and Academic Counsellor at your Study Centre.

Modern forces dealt a blow to folk values, as well as to the folkway of life. In traditional, peasant civilisations, the basic values underlying the elite and the folk

traditions of culture were the same. The difference between the two traditions was primarily that of the degree of refinement, systematisation, and self-consciousness. It was because of the sharing of the basic values and worldview that the traditional elite culture did not damage or weaken the folk cultures, even though they were in constant interaction with each other. The modern elite culture on the other hand is imbued with values which are not only different from folk values but are opposed to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the influence of modern elite culture poses a threat to the very existence of folk culture and folk values. We find thus that although the values of a social system tends to form a coherent and relatively stable pattern, they do not remain static.

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)   In what way were the values of the Aryans different form the Pani? Explain in about six lines.

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2)   Tick the correct answer.

i)   Social values and norms in the Vedic period reflected
the hatred felt by the subjugated people.   Yes   No

ii)   Poets of Rigveda expressed the desirability of the Aryan
to live peacefully with the Dasa.   Yes   No

iii)   In the Upanishad, the knowledge of the self is
considered to be the ultimate aim of life.   Yes   No

iv)   Buddha attacked the great Vedic sacrifices and
declared them wasteful and futile.   Yes   No

v)   The concept of hierarchy is central to Islamic values.   Yes   No

23.6   LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt about the meaning of values in social sciences and how values are different from norms in several ways. You have also come to know about the role of values in the personality structure and socio-cultural systems of society. The unit has also explained the process in which the values change with time in the same society and how the historical circumstances shape and reshape the values of a society.

23.7   KEY WORDS

Achievement   : a result brought about by resolve, persistence or endeavour.

Acquisitiveness : the behaviour which implies a strong desire to acquire or possess.

Affective   : belonging to the sphere of emotions.

Attitudinal   : according to the personal attitudes or feelings or judgements.

Cognitive   : that which can be known, including both the processes of awareness and judgements, such as good and bad, ugly and beautiful etc.

Conative   : an inclination (such as an instinct, a drive, a wish or a craving) to act purposefully.

Concreteness   : something which is definite, factual and real.

Generality   : something which is present in all cases, that is which is common to all.

Psychic   : which belongs to the sphere of the mind or that which is mental.

Specificity   : the condition of being peculiar to a particular individual or group of organisms.

23.8   FURTHER READINGS

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23.9   MODEL ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1)   Values are conceptions of the desirable which influence selective behaviour. They are deeply associated with the human personality and the socio-cultural system of the society. They are the generally accepted basic assumptions of what is right and important in society and what is not. Values define the purposes of life and the means of achieving them.

2)   Values are intimately related to norms since they constitute the basis of norms. Norms depend upon values and are justified through standards of values like "true", "good" and "beautiful". However, norms are more specific in comparison with values which are more general and abstract. Norms are

more prescriptive or prohibitive and therefore, involves lesser freedom than values.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Human being is a value-creating and a value-fulfilling animal in the sense that she or he is not only the fountain of values but also makes value judgements which are embodied in all inter-personal goals, relations and behaviour in the normal functioning of groups and institutions.

2) People resolve the conflicts of values which they face in their daily life by placing these values in a hierarchy. According to the priority of their goals in life and actions required to fulfil those goals, they follow these values. Therefore, value conflicts are resolved through the process of selection of each value.

3) i)   Yes (See section 24.4.1)

    ii) No (See section 23.4.2)

    iii) Yes (See section 23.4.4)

Check Your Progress 3

1) the Aryan were the conquerors, robust and lively in spirit. They were militant and being semi-nomadic they did not believe in accumulation. They readily shared their food with their guests. While the Pani were the vanquished people who were the wealthy traders of that time. Being traders they did not like parting with their wealth, including cattle, without getting something in compensation.

2) i)   Yes (See section 23.5.1.2)

    ii) No (See section 23.5.1.2)

    iii) Yes (See section 23.5.2)

    iv) Yes (See section 23.5.3)

    v)   No (See section 23.5.5)