

# FOREWORD

1. The compilation here is meant to serve as a study note or guide to you as you take the course "Introduction to Social Problems" - GNS 103
2. While it is expected that you should have had basic knowledge of sociological terminologies, efforts are made here to re-introduce you to these and others.
3. This note is meant to assist you (the student) to better grasp what is discussed during lectures by providing you with direct visual contact with the words and terminologies used in the course.
4. It is hoped that this will provide better understanding and assimilation of facts and ultimately assist you in properly expressing yourself in the GNS 103 examination.

**Note:** This is not a substitute for attendance at lectures.

Experience shows that students who attend lectures stand better chance of doing better than those who do not.

However, the choice is yours.

**Hints:**

- (i) Make notes as you listen to lectures;
- (ii) Seek clarification on unclear issues.

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# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

## What is Social Problems?

Poverty, crime, tribalism, religious bigotry, unemployment strikes, examination malpractice, drug abuse, etc., fill our newspapers and these are sources of concern to parents, teachers, and all stake holders in all peace loving societies.

- What makes these things social problems?
- To understand the predisposing factors to social problems, and how to solve them, we must understand;
  - (1) what the term social problems means;
  - (2) how issues come to be referred to as social problems.

Social problems - can be defined in 3 parts / be given a 3-part definition:

- It is
- (a) widely regarded as undesirable or as a source of difficulties;
  - (b) caused by the actions or inactions of people or of society;
  - (c) affects or its thought to affect a large number of people.

In short, there must be the public perception of the condition as undesirable.

### (1) **Awareness of the condition**

Conditions for social problems:

- It must be widely recognised and regarded as undesirable. This means that a sizeable number of people, or influential people must consider it to be a problem.

### Implications

- something cannot be a social problem if nobody is aware of it.
- no matter how many undesirable effects a condition is capable of having, there must be awareness of it before it can emerge as a social problem.

### (2) **Belief that the condition is undesirable**

This means that there must be a significant belief that the condition constitutes a problem for society. For example, issue of unequal sex roles and equal opportunity vary with time. Also, tradition inhibits freedom of choice. The implications are that if

the realities or the conditions do not change over time, that they (conditions) may be social problems at one time but not at another.

- Also, people do not always agree on what is and is not social problems.

### **The role of values in defining social problems**

- No scientific way of deciding what is right.
- The answer is more of values.

Personal belief about what is good or bad, right, wrong. In short, peoples' values determine what gets defined as social problems.

### **Whose values count?**

- Power becomes important in the definition of social problems particularly when disagreement occurs.
- so also are wealth, political power, influence in the media.
- Thus the questions we should ask is:
  - (a) In whose view is this particular condition a problem?
  - (b) Is there any other group of people who might define the problem differently?
  - (c) Who benefits from the accepted definition?

### **Social Problems versus other kinds of problems**

- Public consciousness plays an important role in the definition of social problems. However, public consciousness does not by itself make a problem a social problem, e.g. storm and natural problems because they are not caused by people, they are acts of God.
- To be considered a social problem, a condition must be at least partly the product of human or societal action or in-action; i.e. removal of oil subsidy, SAP, student unrest, Ogoni/Shell issues, Gboko Haraam, occultism and so on.
- Natural problems are not social problems in themselves but our degree of readiness for them and our response to them may very well be social. Thus, failure to act or irresponsibility resulting in, for instance, fire, burglary or disaster, are proofs that human actions/inactions exacerbated or sustained the problem. Further examples can be garnered from the review of the following cases: Tsunami in the Mynenma, Hurricane Katrina in the USA and the nuclear reactor problems in Japan.

## **Social Problems versus Private or Individual Problems**

Individual problems or problems between individuals may not fit into the definition of social problems i.e. problems with marriage, examinations/school work. However, if thousands of students fail a certain course or examination, there may well be a social problem or if several families have problems with their marriages. The word **may**, should be noted because as mentioned earlier, values and power are very important determinants of social problems.

### **SUMMARY**

There are three crucial elements in the definition of social problems: the

- (a) Condition must be widely regarded as undesirable;
- (b) Condition must be at least partly human in origin;
- (c) The problem must affect a larger number of people;

Definitely, the condition must not be the product of merely one person's mistake or personal situation but of human action or in-action on the societal scale.

Each of the three elements of the definition is a necessary condition for the presence of a social problem and each must be present in order for something to be a social problem.

## **SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

### **Predictability of Human Behaviour**

Sociology is interested in the scientific study of human behaviour.

- (1) Assumes that there are enough patterns/regularities in human behaviour to make it possible to study such behaviour scientifically; i.e. with enough information about the situation, it is possible to predict human behaviour with at least some degree of accuracy, i.e. assumptions about human behaviour.

For example, in relation to lecture time - students will attend lecture, if .....

Thus, it follows that with some information/knowledge about a situation which includes knowledge about:

- (a) experience of the people entering the situation, (then);
- (b) a good deal of behaviour in that situation is predictable.

It has been demonstrated that with adequate information, human behaviour can be predicted at a level of accuracy beyond random or even intuitive guessing.

### **Scientific Method**

Sociology uses the scientific method to predict and explain human behaviour. Essentially, the scientific method uses repeated observation of people in similar situations to develop and test theories about how people behave in those situations.

- the theories stand, fail or are modified on the basis of what those repeated observations show to be true about human behaviour in those situations.
- however, on the basis of those observations new theories are developed to:
  - (a) explain why people behave as they do in particular situations;
  - (b) make testable predictions about how people will behave in related or similar situations.

Sociologists are interested mainly in those factors in human behaviour that are related to social structure.

Social structure includes:

- (1) the various social roles and positions (such as doctor, mother, student, labourer, church goer) that make up society;
  - (2) the expectations rewards, and material goods that are attached to those positions;
  - (3) the various relationships (dominance, inter-dependence, cooperation, conflict, division of labour) that exist among those positions;
  - (4) the groups of people, both organised and unorganised who share a common position in society, a common set of values (for example, women, Muslims, Christians, republicans).
- Each of the above has an important effect on human behaviour.
  - Each operates collectively:
    - (a) that is, effect is upon massive number of people in the society;
    - (b) also the effects come not from the action of one or 2 individuals but from the actions and inter-relationships of many people.
  - The general idea is that how people behave is influenced largely by:

- (1) the kind of social structure, the society has; and
- (2) their position(s) in that social structure.

### **Kind of Society**

Thus, it is logical to expect that people will tend to think and behave differently in different societies, i.e. communist, Islamic, Christian, capitalist, American, Nigerian etc. societies.

- Even though there are broad categories and variations, societies in the same category have at least some things in common with other societies.
- This produces similarities in thought and behaviour among societies in each category, i.e. societies in economic, technological systems, and taking into consideration other kinds of variations such as religious, ethnic etc. variations.

### **Position of People within Society**

It is not only the kind of society that influences behaviour the position of people within any given social structure (also influences behaviour).

For example, we would expect (and do find) tremendous differences in both thought and behaviour among corporate executives, assembly-line workers, university professors and the garage boys.

- Each occupies a distinct position within our social structure
- Resultant effect is that each group has:
  - (a) a different collective set of experience;
  - (b) a different set of self-interests;
  - (c) different kinds of (and severity of) social problems.

It is the collective influence such as these that are of primary interest to the sociologists who study social problems.

We are, therefore, in this course, interested in how these collective, or social-structural, influences may;

- (1) lead to the development of social problems;
- (2) offer, potential ways of solving or alleviating social problems.

Also we shall be interested in the influence of individual characteristics on social problems only in so far as such characteristics interact with the social influences, e.g. how an individual relate to society is mainly in the purview of social psychology.

Given our earlier definition of social problem, a sociological approach or the approach which we shall adopt in this course seem satisfying.

Recall that social problem is one that affects larger number of people and is societal in origin.

Thus, if a problem is an individual problem, its causes and solutions are appropriately found in the characteristics of the individual affected. In such cases, individual education counselling, training or therapy may be the answer.

However, when a problem is social - that is, when it is widespread in a society or a group - the answer cannot be found entirely in individuals.

Rather the causes and solutions lie in the society or in the interaction between that society and a significant number of individuals, when the spate of industrial action or crime rise within a period, something is clearly going on at societal level. In instances, such as these, sociological approach is necessary.

Because sociology knows some important principles of how the world operates, not just as mere conceptualisation, it tells us why things happen in certain ways rather than in others and goes beneath the surface of ordinary belief. For example, it seems to follow that much of everything we do is based on rational thought processes - that is the activities of everyday life, work and business, politics and government administrations.

Further, science and engineering govern our natural dealings with the physical world, economics with the activities of buying and selling, political philosophy and administrative science with the realm of policy decisions and formal organisation. And even on the most personal level, a version of psychology describes individual behaviour as straight forwardly determined by the pursuit of rewards and avoidance of punishment. We are therefore presumed to be rational in any direction we might turn.

Despite all this common sense belief in rationality, however, sociology stands out as a dissenter. One of the central discoveries of sociology is that rationality is limited and appears only under certain conditions. More than that, society itself is ultimately based not upon reasoning or rational agreement but upon a non-rational foundation. Take the issue of contracts for instance.

Every contract is really two contracts.

- (1) Contract that we consciously make - to establish a society, form a government, found an organisation, agreement to (i.e. to deliver goods at a certain price).
- (2) The second part is the hidden contract. It is the implicit contract that you and your partners will obey the rules of the first contract.

What it means is that the realistic business person, every shrewd politician; would be aware of the possibility that someone will cheat. To make it worthwhile to enter into a contract, one must be sure that the other-side will uphold their part of the bargain.

If the above is adhered to, that is, if we assume that people are purely rational individuals, who carefully calculate their possible gains and losses, then it becomes impossible for either side to agree to a contract because each person must consider the following:

what could happen from the other side.

whether to live up to the rules or not/

Suppose you live up to your side of the bargain, the other cheats?

The bottom line then is, as a rational person, between cheating and keeping your promise, cheating is the more rational strategy. Do not make a mistake in thinking that cheating is a conventional option.

**Sociology** is the study of people in groups. It involves all aspects of human life (art and culture).

**Culture** is a complex whole which includes all the activities of people.

### **Sociological Perspectives**

Even though sociological approaches involve social structure, they do not all study it in the same way or share basic assumptions about how society works and why it works the way it does.

The approaches make different basic assumptions, ask different questions, and for those reasons often reach different conclusions about "What makes society work".

The three approaches we shall be looking into are:

- (1) Order Perspective
- (2) Conflict Perspective
- (3) Symbolic Interactionist

**Order Perspective**: Known as functionalist or structural functionalist or consensus theory.

- Forms the basis for the systems approach.
- States that society tends to take on whatever form that allows it to work the best. That is no society got to the way, it is by chance. Rather each society takes on the form that it does because somehow, that particular situation, e.g. sharing wife with stranger/guests among Eskimos i.e. settlement in business and the expectation that one be settled or should settle, is the one that makes life comfortable.

This is analogous to a biological organism in which each part contributes to the harmonious integration of the whole. Each social system contributes to social order.

To the functionalists, most social customs and arrangements can be explained in terms of their usefulness to a society or that they simply have functions.

Sometimes uses and functions are obvious and hidden at other times.

Functions could be manifest or latent.

Manifest function - are functions that are very evident and are sometimes publicly stated, e.g. National Service (NYSC).

The manifest function is that it provides personnel for companies and businesses at cheap cost and of course curbs the problem of unemployment for young graduates.

### **The Latent Function**

The latent function of NYSC (National Youth Service Corp) could be to guarantee that every graduate goes through the experience of serving the nation under the NYSC programme and as such is thought to sacrifice for society by learning to be tolerant toward other tribes and religious groups. If the programme is effective, the society is guaranteed a certain level of consensus.

A latent functions can be as real as manifest function, that is when the expected goals is (are) achieved.

An arrangement that functions to meet some need of a society can also have undesirable effect.

These are known as dysfunctional, i.e. when rather than learning to understand the differences of other societies the people develop dislike for that group.

### **Interdependency (Functionalists)**

#### **Assumption of the functionalists**

(1) Interdependent nature of society - that is:

- everything is related, somehow, to everything else.
- thus a change in one part of the system can have effects in areas that appear to be unrelated
- the more complex a society, the greater the likelihood that this will become (example of strike of oil tanker drivers) and

- (2) Each part of the system performs a function for the society.
  - what emerges from this is a system of interrelated parts each of which is meeting the same kind of need in the society contributing to the deficiency of the social system, or in some way helping to hold the system together.
- (3) Tendency toward stability.
  - each part is performing a function each part is necessary and will tend to stay together so that the function is fulfilled, except some external forces/conditions create a new need.

Thus, the following tend to be true of social change:

- (1) Social change will occur only in response to some change from outside the social system.
- (2) When social change occurs - it will tend to be minimal - there will only be enough change to adjust to the new situation.
- (3) Social change tends to ripple through the system, e.g. action reaction/law of conservation of mass.

### **Consensus and Social Solidarity**

- Society tends toward consensus.
  - \* certain values and beliefs are generally agreed upon.
  - \* necessary because the interdependent nature of society require cooperation
  - \* people cooperate best when they share common values and when each member identifies with the group.
  - \* consensus and solidarity are important parts of any effective society.
  - \* any condition that may cause a breakdown in consensus and social order is a serious threat to society.

### **CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE**

- Certain resources in society, such as wealth and power are scarce.

In order words, there is not enough for people to have all that they want.

- Moreover, scarce resources are unevenly distributed some people have much more than others.
- The above creates conflict of self-interest among various groups in society.
- Interest of the Haves is to keep things as they are.
- Interest of the Have-nots is to have social change in order to increase their share of these scarce resources.

### **Power and Social Structure**

The advantaged people have more of their share of power because they control society.

**False consciousness:** This is when the disadvantaged group in society accepts a belief or ideology that goes against its own interest, serving instead those of the dominant group.

- This is because the most powerful can use power to influence the thinking of other i.e. control of Mass Media, religion, or political control.
- Thus, the dominant group exercises such control over values, beliefs and social practices.

### **Tendency toward conflict and social change**

- Conflict comes from society and brings about social change.
- Conflict not as a result of external influence but from within/inside.

### **The Appearance Order**

Appearance of stability does not always amount to reality of stability may be deceiving.

- could be product of false consciousness
- or the powerful using power to repress dissent
- conflict perspective sees society as a combination of groups with conflicting interest
- dominant group shapes society according to self-interest thus leading to a society which is mostly functional to the group.

Thus, to understand any society, one must understand the interest of the dominant group.

However, regardless of group control, different groups in the society continue to have conflicting interests which will sooner or later bring social change.

## **SYMBOLIC INTERACTION**

American sociological perspective with roots in philosophy of pragmatism. Its a micro-level orientation.

Meaning - living things as attempting to make practical adjustments to their environments/surroundings.

- as pragmatists, they see living things as probing and testing their environment. Thus, truth is not absolute but relative to the needs and interests of the organisms.

For example, knowing and acting are intimately linked. We act on the basis of our idea about the world. In short, the reality of the world is not merely something that is "out there" waiting to be discovered by us, but is actively created as we act in, and toward, the world.

It's a framework for building theory that sees society as the product of the everyday interactions of individuals.

Society is nothing more than the reality people construct for themselves as they interact with one another. They live in a world of symbols attaching meaning to virtually everything from words to a wink of an eye.

Reality is simply how we define our surroundings, our duties toward others, and even our identities.

## **PROBLEMS OF INEQUALITY**

Poverty and class inequality

Poverty Refined

Dictionary definitions

- (a) The condition or quality of being poor
- (b) Scantiness of supply
- (c) Absence or scantiness of necessary qualities or elements to make life comfortable

On an absolute scale, being poor involves lack of housing food, medical care, and other necessities of maintaining life.

- Absolute poverty - usually defined as the absence of enough money to secure life's necessities.

- It's annual income below which people are considered poor.
- Relative poverty - is measured by comparing the condition of those at the bottom by the standards that exist within a society.
- Thus poverty in the U.S. may not be the same as poverty in Nigeria.
- Thus it allows for changing standards about what are considered to be necessities and what the thoughts about these are.
- And unlike absolute measure which is too static, ignores the general distribution of income in society.
- Thus allows for poverty threshold to be raised as the standard of living in the country rises.
- Example of relative measure of poverty is a comparison of the lowest fifth of the population in terms of income with the other fourth-fifths.
- Such measure of course means that a segment of the population will always poor unless the total income distribution approaches equality.

## **WHO ARE THE POOR?**

The index is hard to define but for purpose of this course, the poor are those who live below the subsistence level.

- Subsistence level can be defined as a level at which individuals are barely able to sustain themselves;
- Lack of potable water supply, electricity, hospital/good medical care

## **Consequences of Poverty**

Poor people live shorter lives and are ill more of the time than non-poor people.

- their babies are more likely to die in infancy.
  - poverty affects people's lives in many undesirable ways besides.
  - In fact, all aspects of life are influenced for the worse by poverty.
  - Life thus, is a different experience for poor people than it is for the rest of us.

## **Education**

Education is seen as an opportunity which offers everyone the chance for success.

It is much more difficult for poor people to get a good education. Thus, children raised in poor families attain considerably lower levels of education than others. They,

- Attend less well-less funded schools
- Frequently expected to fail by their teachers
- have lower intelligence
- Generally get less education and learn less from the education they get.
- Thus increase their chances of being poor themselves when they reach adulthood.
- Explains to some degree why poverty is sometimes passed from generation to generation.

### **Housing**

Poor people experience problems with both the quality and affordability housing.

- mud houses;
- over-crowding (due to their low incomes, they live in over-crowded houses/rooms);
- affordability is the greatest housing problem of all to the poor;
- increasing housing cost
- earn stagnant and low salaries thus,
- in short, have to pay a very large share of their income, purchasing food, clothing, getting loans.

### **Homelessness**

These people are likely to be the ones who sleep in markets, under bridges, uncompleted buildings etc.

### **Criminal Victimization and Criminal Justice System**

They are more likely to be victimised than others as criminals and are also more likely to be arrested and jailed.

Relates to the type of crime they commit, i.e. commit robbery or burglary to get some money, are more likely to be caught, i.e. time and place likely to be quickly found out and accurately reported to police.

On the contrary, the wealthy have access to private space, i.e. take drugs in the confines of their homes.

### **Versus White-Collar Crime and Corporate Crime**

i.e. embezzlement, anti-trust violation, fraud, corruption etc. These are hard to detect acts.

### **Psychological Correlates**

Poverty also has an emotional or psychological side in relation to less-tangible personal happiness, mental health.

People with low incomes have generally higher rates of mental disorders especially the more serious ones such as depression.

- Schizophrenia and personality disorders.
- Appear to be generally less happy than other.
- They are less likely than others to rate themselves as "very happy".
- Are more likely to exhibit their behaviours in public places.

## **OTHER CAUSES OF POVERTY**

### **Short-Term Poverty**

Although growing up in a poor family greatly increases one's risk of experiencing poverty as an adult, it is also important to avoid popular misconceptions about permanent poverty. Some poverty may be due to loss of job, temporary disability, loss of spouse through death, improper financial management.

Usually, poverty due to the above are temporary, that is, with little help they may escape poverty and become self-supporting again.

### **Social Class/Socio-Economic inequality**

**Concepts - Social Class:** refers to a group of people in a society who experience a similar level of living which differs from that of other groups in the same society who have higher or lower levels.

The relevant questions that can emanate from this are:

- Does social class exist in Nigeria?
- Is inequality a social problem?

### **Inequality and the poverty problem**

First, it is part of the cause of the problem of poverty i.e. if there were less inequality there might well be less poverty.

Poverty in Nigeria arises from poor, unfair, unequal distribution of wealth, income and resources and management.

In other words, there is more than enough to go round. However, some simply have more than they need while others have less.

### **Inequality and the fairness issue**

Economic inequality is a social problems based on the fairness issue.

**Question:** Is it right for one person to have a hundred or more times as much income and wealth as another, particularly in a supposed-to-be egalitarian society were all aspire for the same middle class ideals?

- Inequality should carry some benefit for society, or be closely linked to individual's accomplishments.
- However, this is usually not the case, because:
  - \* so much wealth in our society is inherited rather than earned by the individuals who presently enjoys it;
  - \* get-rich-quick syndrome;
  - \* drugs, settlement, robbery extortion etc.

### **Inequality and social conflict**

- It is an important source of social conflict in our society which inhibit the cooperaton necessary to make the society efficient and productive.
- Much of social conflict in our society is in some way associated with economic inequality.
- It is the core of most labour-management disputes and
- Poor people's protest movements.
- Tribal conflict

- Religion conflict

All the above conflicts whether entirely or partly economic have led at times to serious violence in our society and have contributed enormously as barriers to national unity.

- Economic inequality is a social problem because it causes or contributes to the above conflicts and inhibits and cooperation.

### **Income Defined**

It is the total naira value of all that a person receives during some fixed period-usually a year.

Roughly, it is the amount taxable and un-taxable i.e. wages, salaries, profits, interests on investments or businesses, rent benefits, gifts etc.

Wealth - net worth

Unrelated to time period.

- It is the total value of everything that one owns minus one's debts.
  - Includes the value's of all money, real estate, stocks bonds, business assets, possession that a person has less any money he or she owes.
  - It is generally easier to get information about income than it is about wealth.

### **Functionalist view of Economic Inequality**

#### **Basic Argument**

Economic stratification or inequality exists in all societies it is useful or functional for those societies.

- It offers a means of motivating people to be productive (Kingsley Davis and Wibert Moore, 1945).

They argue that:

- (1) Some jobs meet more critical societal needs than others.
- (2) Some require longer and more difficult training than others.
- (3) Often they (jobs) carry considerable responsibility.
- (4) Some are more stressful than others.

(5) Some involve very long hours.

Thus, if the most skilled are to be motivated - to get the necessary training and accept the responsibility these jobs involve, they must be rewarded for it, i.e.

Professor	versus	Labourer
Doctor	versus	Labourer

Thus, it is argued that by paying the more skilled better we ensure that those who have the abilities to be lecturer/doctor, etc. choose these professions over being labourer.

### **The Conflict view of Economic Inequality**

Argues that stratification serves not the interests of the society as a whole but rather the interests of the relatively few who own most of the wealth.

Stratification is a reflection of people's power ability to influence the actions of others.

Those who have power, are able to influence the political and economic system in ways that work to their economic advantage - that is why they have wealth and high incomes.

Argues, in effect, that wealth begets wealth.

Thus, the rich get richer, and everyone else stays relatively poor, at least in terms of the wealth (the rich/powerful) they own.

### **Functionalist and Conflict Assumptions**

Inequality as means of motivating high qualified person to fill difficult and important jobs

Contradiction - most qualified are not admitted to professional schools or do not get jobs for which they are qualified.

### **Prejudice, Discrimination and Ethnicism/Tribalism**

- Prejudice and discrimination are usually so firmly entrenched that people either are often unaware of their presence or rationalise away their existence.
- Independence and treatment of other segments, i.e. used as subordinates.
- Tribal resentment is real, deep and sometimes expensive, but violence is only one consequence of prejudice and discrimination.

Other consequences are physical and social segregation of minorities in such areas as employment, politics and education.

Women, the aged, mentally and physically handicapped, ex-convicts are example of the potential victims.

Society usually discriminates against these people.

## **WHAT IS MINORITY?**

Refers to a relatively small number of people (may not be numerically smaller than the majority). That is size alone is not the determinant.

Existence of the minority in society implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher status and greater privileges.

Minority status carries with it the exclusion from full participation in the life of the society.

Minority must:

- possess some distinctive physical or cultural characteristics that can be used to identify its member from the majority;
- the more evident characteristic which is more physical than is cultural
- if cultural, it can be cancelled through  
(1) change of name (2) accent or (3) adoption of culture of majority;

However, sex/gender is more difficult to change or conceal.

- members of minority are usually denied equal treatment in the society.

## **Prejudice**

- Refers to emotional attitudes that are based on limited personal experience.
- Prejudiced individuals are not open to new information that might change their attitudes.
- Prejudice involves an either/or type of logic i.e. a group is either good or bad and it is assumed that each member of that group possess the same characteristics without, an examination of evidence or facts of the matter.
- It is prejudgement of a group of people before independent evidence or facts of the matter.

- Prejudice is learned primarily through interaction with people who are prejudiced rather than through contact with the group toward whom prejudice is felt.

### **Prejudice Involves**

- Over-generalisation based on biased or insufficient information.
- Usually defended either by citing limited personal experiences with minority group members or by reciting stories told by others about their experiences.
- Because additional information is inadmissible, prejudiced attitudes are not altered either by new personal experiences or by accounts from others.
- Usually contradictory evidence elicits emotional response.

Prejudice is a state of mind. It is a positive attitude, a system of negative conceptions, feelings and action-orientations regarding the members of a particular group.

It involves action whereby members of a particular group are accorded negative treatment on the basis of racial, ethnic/tribal, or religious background.

Any negative attitude has the tendency to somehow, somewhere express itself in action.

Few people are able to keep their dislike or antipathies to themselves.

Thus, if individuals have intense negative attitude or prejudice, there is greater likelihood of these resulting into possible action.

Prejudice refers to attitudes.

When a prejudiced is acted upon, discrimination occurs.

Discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of persons on the basis of their membership in some groups.

### **Reactions/Types of actions as a result of prejudice**

- (1) Anti-locution: Most prejudiced people simply talk about their beliefs with like-minded friends or strangers but do not go further than this.
- (2) Avoidance: With more intense prejudice avoidance of disliked group takes place even at the cost of personal inconveniences. These actors do not inflict harm upon the group he dislikes.

- (3) Discrimination: Makes detrimental distinction of an active sort, i.e. undertakes to exclude all members of the group in question from certain employment etc. housing, churches, work.
- Segregation: An institutionalised form of discrimination forced legally or by common custom.
- (4) Physical Attack: Under conditions of emotion, prejudice may lead to acts of violence or semi-violence. An unwanted person may be forcibly ejected from the neighbourhood or severely threatened to leave in fear.
- (5) Extermination: Lynching, massacres, program, massacre of people mark the ultimate degree of violent expression of prejudice.

**N.B.:** Prejudice - is usually considered the cause of discrimination.

HOWEVER, discrimination can occur without prejudice and vice-versa.

Discrimination may sometimes lead to prejudice, e.g. skilled worker versus unskilled. Unskilled feels threatened for example, the fear of economic threat may lead to unequal treatment of members of the skilled group. For example, a junior officer, who claims to be more knowledgeable about the job than the supervisor (a nurse how claims to be a better medical practitioner than the medical doctor).

### **Stereotype**

- A set of ideas based on distortion, exaggeration, and over simplification applied to all members of a group.
- May be used as a justification for prejudiced attitudes and discrimination.

For example North-South relationship, Ibo/Yoruba

### **Causes of Prejudice and Discrimination**

Prejudice and discrimination against certain groups cannot be accounted for by any single factor:

- the causes are many, complex and inter-related;
- explanations can be classified into 3 broad categories:
  - (a) Psychological
  - (b) Power differential
  - (c) Cultural

## **Psychological Explanation**

- Attention here is focused on the prejudiced person's personality, how it developed, and how it functions in the present.
- Questions that may be asked bother on.
  - (a) what relationship with their parents or with others significant to them;
  - (b) what are their values, attitudes, belief?
  - (c) how high is their self-esteem.

Prominent psychological explanations of prejudice and discrimination are frustration aggression and the authorisation personality.

## **Frustration/Aggression Explanation**

Prejudice and discrimination may be the product of deep-seated hostility and aggression that stem from frustration, i.e. hostility that cannot be directed to the actual source of frustration.

## **Authorisation Personality**

Personality type - authoritarian personality - tends to be more prejudiced than other types characterised by excessive conformity, submissiveness to authority figure, inflexibility repression of impulses/desires, fearfulness and arrogance towards persons or group thought to be inferior.

## **Differential Power Explanation**

Traces the existence of prejudice and discrimination to group interests rather than to personality needs.

Majority may use prejudice and discrimination as weapons of power in the domination of a subordinate group.

May be motivated by the desire to gain or increase its control over scarce goods and services.

**Socio-cultural explanations** - human behaviour and attitude are patterned by culture - norms inform us as to what we should do or should not do and guide inter-group relations.

**SCAPEGOAT THEORY** – based the idea/belief that somebody or group must be accountable for social misconduct and actual identification of the culprits. For example, the Osu system in Igbo land.

## **Institutional Discrimination**

This type of discrimination consists of practices within our social institutions that tend to cause or perpetrate ethnic or tribal inequality.

It is sometimes conscious and deliberate, i.e. apartheid in South Africa.

## **Conflict/Functionalist social structural.**

Conflict - the cause of ethnic inequality is not to be found in prejudice or even society's tendency toward ethnocentrism. It occurs because someone has an interest in establishing or maintaining it.

## **Social Structural Roots of Discrimination**

Four elements in the concept of social structure.

- (1) Social positions that make up society.
- (2) The expectations, rewards, material, good attached to positions.
- (3) The various relationships among these positions.
- (4) The groups of people who share common position in society.

These influence some societies such that:

- (1) Some are more prejudice and discriminating than others.
- (2) In any given society, some group of people are more prejudiced and/or discriminating than others.

Ultimate reason for these lie in the social structure, positions, rewards etc.

## **DEVIANCE, COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Much of human behaviour is guided by the cultural patterns, of a society. Traditions, customs and cultural norms guide individual and groups of people in their interactions with others.

## **Conformity and Social Control**

Remarkable sameness of behaviour from one person to another.

Shock in personal experience that another person of another social class, religion or political group behaves just like your group. Persuasion is beneath the surface much like ourselves.

True that other animal species have behaviours typical to specific species, i.e. lions are ferocious, cattle are docile, ants and bees are industrious.

These are biological and generalisations about typical or average behaviour, i.e. some lions may be tamed and some cattle may be wild, but these are exceptional traits in each species.

Instinctive biological equipment of each species guarantee that behaviour vary only within limits set by these instincts - no whale will ever fly and no eagle will swim under water.

### **Social Control**

As presented above, human behaviour is not closely limited by instinctive tendencies.

Concept of Universal "human nature" to which the behaviour of each member of human species must conform is non-existent culturally.

- Does not hinder the fact that human behaviour is constrained by the tendency toward uniformity. For example:
  - people within the same region speak the same language, eat the same food, dress similarly, have similar religions and political ideas, which have little to do with instinctive tendencies.
  - that is, where-ever people live together, they have set ideas about values or right and proper forms of human behaviour.
  - **The above conformity to the social type and social values is social control, that is:**
    - the pressure that people can exert on others compels them to behave in line with social expectations.
- **Reference Group**: A group of people who have influence over the person because of his sensitivity to this group's approval, e.g. person's behaviour tend to conform to the expectations of peers.
- there is always the pressure to conform to values of fellow students.
- Oftentimes, these values emphasise popularity at the expense of academic activities i.e. giving undue emphasis to athletic prowess over academic

Why do people conform to the expectations of others?

- Explanation:  
From the point of view of the individual, society is an entity which is exterior to the individual and which continually constrains his behaviour.

Analogous to child - parent - siblings, nursery school peers, relationships. The actors learn that others expect conformity to the rules and regulations that sustain a social order. For example,

- A pre-existing set of social arrangements demanding conformity: i.e. joining a club or occupying an office.
- Whenever there are social expectations that the individual's behaviour will fit into the social organisation, there are mechanisms to constrain the behaviour and make it costly of energy to be exceptional.

Imitation: human behaviour may be seen as fundamentally imitative in character.

- People conform to prevailing ways because they never see anything else and it is expensive of energy to act in ways for which there are no models for imitation.
- Everybody imitate (including adult).

### **Reward and Punishment**

Hedonism –the concept that human behaviour is motivated by tendencies toward pleasure seeking and pain-avoidance. These tendencies are unique to human beings because they seem to anticipate these experiences before they occur and to plan ways and means to attain pleasure and avoid pain. Even though other animals experience pain and pleasure, you cannot promise to give a dog the best bone in order for it to comply with your dictates. However, mummy can promise to buy the expensive handset for you if you get As in your courses this semester.

- In short, only human beings are truly susceptible to the influence of promises and threats.

### **Direct Interpersonal Controls**

The need to be well-liked:

- Liking to be liked in the sight of our fellows and the propensity to get ourselves noticed and noticed favourably, by our kind.
- Thus, the person who is least involved emotionally in the relationship may be in the best position to dominate the others.

## **Normative Controls**

This is another factor in behaviour that is determined by pain-pleasure balance.

- Factor of legitimacy of the expectations that are fulfilled or frustrated.
- That is people sometimes treat others well not because they want to do so or because they expect something in return for their kindness, but because this treatment is sometimes right to receive and it is their obligation to give, i.e. a wife is entitled to economic support by the husband who derives satisfaction by giving to her.

Also society has normative expectations for people's behaviour and will bring sanctions (punishments and rewards) to bear to encourage conformity to those expectations.

## **General and Specialised**

Norms differ:

- (1) In the degree of generality and in the scope of coverage.
  - (2) Some are expectations are for all persons by virtue of their membership in a society. For example thou shalt and thou shalt not of social expectations refer to any and all members of a society.
  - (3) Some expectations are only for certain categories of people such as students, presidential candidates. Generally, children are dependent on adults but not adults as dependants.
- Differential norms tend to be general in that all people hold to their differentiated expectations. Professors and students share the expectations that lecturers will behave in one way and students in another.
  - Moral obligations may be enforced by the communities/general expectation that professionals will conduct themselves according to its stipulations, i.e. code of ethics for lecturers/student relationship.

## **Folkways and Mores**

Norms - is the standard of expected behaviour or shared expectations for behaviour.

- implicit
- explicit
- assumptive norms
- statistical

Mathematical average or what is most frequently or typically done.

- Folkways refer to the less severely sanctioned norms.
- Mores refer to those norms which represent “doctrines” of group welfare. The violation of which are seen as harmful in some basic way to the society.

### **Origins of Norms**

- Ways by which people manage or deal with the problems of day-to-day life and existence with others - involves challenges as how to relate compatibly to friends, acquaintances business associates, peer groups, how to make a living/maintain a family etc.
- **Customs** are those norms that grow up spontaneously as the result of the living together of a group of people and that are diffusely interacting - that is sanction is administered by members of society at large.
- **Laws** are those norms that are enacted as the result of formal discussion and deliberation and that are enforced by such specific agencies of law enforcement, i.e. police, court, etc.

**Civil Law** - deals with dispute between people or groups such as argument between a landlord and tenant over the provision of apartment lease.

- **Socialisation:** The process through which the values, norms of the society get acquired or learned by individuals/groups in society.

**Ethnocentrism:** the idea or feeling that you culture or way of life is superior to those of others. It usually leads to prejudice/discrimination.

**Cultural relativism:** judging or evaluating people from their cultural point of view. -  
- That is not passing value judgement.

What do the following mean? Culture shock and reverse culture shock.

Criminal law – refers to public safety and well-being and defines the behaviours that constitute a crime.

Crime - a behaviour that violates criminal law and is punishable by time, jail or

### **Deviant Behaviour**

When behaviour of people falls short of ideal notions of what that behaviour should be, some interesting things tend to happen to the actors. The behaviour is usually "deviant" and the actors classified as deviants.

The behaviour in question may be tolerated, especially when it does not affect the activities of other people or if deviant can convince others of "good reasons" for the behaviour.

**Note that:**

- **deviance** is that behaviour which does not conform to social expectations.
- Sociologists do not condemn behaviour as harmful or bad.
- Deviance could be a violation of social expectations that are in fact unwise, unjust i.e. civil disobedience.
- **Primary and secondary deviance**

Primary - or initial acts or deviance

Secondary - acts committed as a result of societal reaction to primary deviance.

Symbolic interactionism - self fulfilling prophecy.

- (1) Why are some behaviours considered deviant and some others not?
- (2) Who determines what is deviant?
- (3) Whose interests are served by some people as deviant and others not?

**Tolerance of Deviance**

Public tolerance of certain deviance, i.e. African time.

**Expectations of Deviance**

Behaviour of people is disapproved of if it adheres rigidly to the ideal, i.e. a perfectionist tends to make others uncomfortable in comparison with themselves. A lady is likely to be disparaged as being too neat if she spends a lot of time dressing herself up. Straight A students generally have problems interacting with their colleagues in school in that they are usually considered to be proud/showing off their brilliance.

Thus for persons to be well-integrated into social relations must they demonstrate not only respectability that they measure up well to ideal standards but must demonstrate and acceptable amount of approachability.

## CONFLICT OF NORM

Labelling a given act as deviant is relative to the standards of the people doing the labelling that is, what is approved behaviour in one perspective may be disapproved of in another.

Behaviour that is seen as chronically deviant by certain group in the society, may in fact, conform to the expectations of another group.

## Overlooking of Deviance

Is deviance the act of deviance or the fact of being caught in the act.

A great deal of deviance may be tolerated so long as it is done quietly and without calling the deviance to the attention of those responsible for administering sanctions, i.e. unmarried adults are 'not children' thus their personal sexual relationships are their own affairs so long as they do not openly flaunt these behaviours.

## Justification for Deviance

Moral disapproval of deviance is tempered by neutralisation.

Although certain acts are technically violations of norms the violation may be seen as fully justifiable by the situation.

Take cognisance of the circumstances i.e. self-defence.

## Sources of Deviant Behaviour

Deviance is an inherently social act:

- Social fact or any kind should be explained by other social facts
- **Anomie approach:** Conditions may be so frustrating to some people that they are driven in desperation to deviant ways of behaviour.

Anomie is a state of dissatisfaction arising from a sense of discrepancy between the aspirations of a person and the means that he has available to realise these ambitions; i.e. in harsh economic times peoples' aspirations also rise higher than in earlier times and are likely to be disappointed with constituted authorities.

- the concept of it's not how you play the game but whether you win or lose that is really important

- Given this emphasis on success, people are frequently tempted to cheat a little if necessary to achieve their ambition.

### **Subculture Approach**

Sees deviant behaviour a normal behaviour both psychologically and socially.

Normal - because it conforms to the behaviour of a sub-culture in which the deviant lives and from which he draws group support for his deviant activity.

### **Social - response approach**

Deviance is not quality of the act that the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender", i.e. the deviant is the person to whom the label has been successfully applied.

### **Labelling Theory/Societal Response Approach**

- Primary deviance – to be explained and elaborated upon.
- Symbolic interactionism theory offers some important insights into how men and women are taught to fill different roles in society.
- Posits that (key concept) communication makes a big difference in behaviour - that's people act on the basis of message they receive from others, and how they understand those messages.
- Concept of looking - class self.
- Image that each of us develops according to the message we receive from others.
- We think and behave according to our understanding of those messages i.e. if a young girl is told that she is pretty repeatedly, she will come to believe that:
  - (1) she is in fact pretty;
  - (2) being pretty is an important thing in the life.

Similarly, if she is told that she is not good in certain things, such as math, she will come to believe that she is not good at such things, and would be better off working at things she can be successful at. Product is a young lady/woman who devotes a lot of attention to her appearance and regards being pretty as a key to success in life, and who is intimidated by anything involving numbers. In the real sense, there is little or no evidence of differences in what young girls and boys do, but the older they become, the greater the differences in the areas in which boys and girls are likely or expected to excel.

In summary, primary deviance does not affect people's self-concept or interfere with their ability to function in socially acceptable roles. For example, juveniles and university students

engage in behaviours which they discontinue as they grow older or leave school. This type of behaviour is classified as "crime of passage". The fact is that they have not internalised the acts or become committed to delinquent career, and very importantly have not been regarded by others as delinquents or bad people.

Secondary deviance involves internalisation and acceptance of deviance as a way by the actors. Those that have been successfully labelled develop deviant identification from being isolated, disapproved of.

Thus, the rather baseless messages that young boys and girls are given by their parents, schools, peers, and the media end up as Self-fulfilling prophecy.

That is they create differences that they expect, but that were not there to begin with.

### **Functions of Deviance**

- (1) Re-invigorates: the collective conscience of a people
  - the violation of a norm gives people the occasion to reassert the importance of the norm i.e.
- (2) Provides the impetus for social change, i.e. an innovator in all times and places is likely to be treated as deviant.
- (3) Scapegoating.

### **Dysfunctions**

An act of deviance may be seen as the failure of persons to make appropriate contributions in functional areas, i.e. in the family. Such as when a well thought activity produces an unwanted result.

### **Collective Behaviour**

- Relatively unorganised or unstructured forms of human social behaviour.
- Leadership is less established or legitimated as authority.
- The mood of the mob perhaps determines the characteristic of its leadership more than any established rights of individuals to provide this leadership.
- People acting in crowds differ from the way they would act as individuals.
- Individuals forming part of a crowd acquire, solely from numerical considerations, a sentiment of invisible power which allows them to yield to instincts which had they been alone, would have been kept under restraint.

- Observations are that crowd behaviours are intellectually and morally inferior.
- People lack of fail to use resources to correct their misconceptions.
- Riots and mob actions represent more violent forms of collective behaviour.
- There may be elements of deliberation and planning and even a measure of fun associated with armed violence.

## **DRUG ABUSE**

Drug - any substance, other than food, that when taken into the body alters the body's structure or function whether for:

- medical use
- recreational use
- most experts agree that medicinal use and recreational use of drugs do not constitute abuse
- for medicinal use - many drugs have saved millions of lives and contributed to good health
- hence drug abuse must be distinguished from such abuse as the legitimate use of drugs
- recreational uses of at least some drugs is permissible i.e.:
  - \* occasionally taking a glass of wine (with dinner);
  - \* or moderate use of such for its taste;
  - \* as part of social activity
 For mild effect, i.e. relaxation with a glass of wine or coffee.
- However, there is no clear consensus on just where recreational use ends and abuse starts.
- Drug abuse in general is defined as the use of drugs in a way that is harmful to the self or others.
- Problem with the definition of drug abuse is that experts do not agree on what type of use is harmful and what is not.
- All would classify drunkenness and heroine addition as abuse.
- But some would classify any illegal drug as abuse, while others will argue that some illegal drugs such as marijuana are no more harmful and less so than some legal ones, such as alcohol and nicotine in tobacco.

- Thus, some experts argue that how one uses a drug may be more important than what drug one uses.
- There is a big difference between infrequent recreational use of marijuana and the person who can't get through the day without smoking a joint every 3 or 4 hours.
- Although the boundaries are not so clear drug use can be broken down into 3 general classes:
  - (1) legitimate medicinal use;
  - (2) recreational use that does not constitute abuse (possible only for some drugs); and
  - (3) abuse - any use of drugs that results in harm to self or others.
- It includes any use that results in psychological or physical dependence - a feeling, either sensory or emotional, that one has to have the substance.
- It involves drugs that are psychoactive. These are drugs that in some way alter the user's senses, mood or behaviour.
- Physical effects are often predictable but psychological, behavioural and emotional effects can be highly unpredictable and often vary from individual to individual and from one circumstance to another in the same individual.

### **Types of Dependence**

- (1) Physical dependence/addiction
- (2) Psychological dependence.

Physical dependence – the actor experiences physical symptoms if he/she stops receiving the drug.

The symptom is called withdrawal symptoms – range from mild irritation to pain, convulsions, hallucinations and even death.

A user is not truly addicted until he/she reaches a point where the primary motivation for taking it is to avoid some/such unpleasant symptoms.

The users who never experience such feelings or who fail to associate them with the drug ingested, avoid addiction/or do not get addicted. For example users of alcohol, barbiturates, some tranquilizers and opiates such as heroin.

### **Psychological Dependence**

Drugs that do not have withdraw symptoms (physical may elicit psychological dependence, i.e. marijuana, tobacco and some hallucinogens).

Psychological dependence can be extremely hard to overcome in some cases just as in physical dependence.

### **Drug Abused**

Over-the-counter drugs

Prescription drugs

Hard drugs

- (a) Alcohol
- (b) Tobacco
- (c) Indian hemp/marijuana
- (d) Cocaine
- (e) Heroine

The last three (c), (d) and (e) are usually classified as hard drugs

- relate the use of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana with the last three
- note that the use of any of the 3 common drugs alcohol, tobacco and Indian hemp appears to do little to increase the likelihood of using the harder drugs;

### **Why people abuse drugs**

- Biological
- Inheritance

### **Psychological**

- Personality disorder addiction
- Cultural Transmission/Learning Process

### **Social System**

Functionalist approach to social analysis treats units, groups, communities, societies, etc. as social systems

- these are groups of persons who interact and influence other each other on permanent basis.
- Units in that their components are organized in terms of the system properties of integration and equilibrium.

- Treats any system whether physical, biological or social as having parts such as the organs of a body, molecules of a compound, etc.
- Integration – means there is some relationship among those parts and between parts and the whole system.
- Believes that variability in one part is a function of variability of function in other parts.
- So also is the maintenance system.

Social needs:

- (a) Adaptations - requires that ways be found to produce the general facilities required for accomplishment of systems goals.
- (b) Goal attainment - i.e. whether to expand income or to repair roads.
- (c) Pattern maintenance - need for society to maintain properly motivated individuals.
  - pattern maintenance mechanisms are those which produce individuals with basic values that prevailing culture emphasizes
  - integration – need for a system to have mediating body, i.e. policy to formulate laws and enforce them.
  - legal – judicial procedures for settling disputes and maintaining order.

From the above, a social system can be defined as a group of persons who interact and influence on another on a permanent basis.

- Composed of inter-dependent statuses and roles.
- Existence of power structure and pattern of sanction, formal and informal.
- Culturally defined objectives, norms and values
- Have facilities.

### **Major Process of a Social System**

- Communication
- Decision making – process of reading alternatives
- Socialization – stating norms and values of the system
- Social Control – limiting and regulating actions and behaviours of members.
- Socio-cultural or systemic linkages
- Boundary maintenance

### **Social Movements**

An organized group of individuals with a common purpose to either promote or resist change through collective action.

Social movements involve socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order.

Some social movements seem to be aimed at arresting or forestalling social changes rather than its promotion based on fear of change of status quo, preference for the good old days that are now, unfortunately, gone.

- (1) There is effort by members to reject the social order.
- (2) Some remove themselves from active involvement in the "social order" and substitute a "purified" form of life in which only members of the movement participate.

### **Definition**

A social movement is a joint activity of a number of people who reject certain aspects of the social order (or changes in that order) and who express this rejection in efforts either to change this social order (or to prevent changes through the use of routine or extra-ordinary means to remove themselves from this rejected social order.

It has three targets:

- (a) Prevailing cultural values of society
- (b) Prevailing forms of the basis social institutions
- (c) The prevailing system of social stratification

Method employed:

- (1) Can withdraw
- (2) Eliminate the conditions

**Occultism:** more private, oriented toward and inward experience than public.

- Talks of controlled encounter with the ultimate. Basically an internal quest through a fascinating, enchanted and marvelous world.
- The occult provides its adherents with alternative rationality, life styles, belief systems in many cases that are different from conventional beliefs of moral order.
- It re-introduces enchantment, mysticism and romanticism into men's world view. In a sense, it is truly "outside" modern society.

## **PROBLEMS OF FAMILY**

The family of today is different from what it was 25-40 years ago. For example,

- (1) Family is smaller
- (2) Relationships between husband and wife are more equal, with less specialised roles.
- (3) Wife is much more likely to be employed outside the home.
- (4) People are marrying at a later age.
- (5) People are having children at an older age
- (6) Young adults are much less likely to live with their parents
- (7) Live in family of orientation – consisting of father, mother and children.

More separation occurs in the family today. For example, the following can be observed

- (a) Changes in the economic meaning of the family.
- (b) Women liberation movements: NOWS, Women-in-law, Business.
- (c) Increased participation by women in the labour-force
- (d) Legal changes making divorces easier
- (e) To a lesser extent greater social acceptability of divorce and single parenthood.

- More equal husband-wife relations, more women employed.
- Women in work force make family a more socially equal institution
- Change can be threatening in the husbands
- Interaction with children is less, i.e. Day-Care (crèche).

## **Conflict View**

Changes in the family - represent a trend toward greater personal choice and equality between sexes:

- people get married out of choice
- get out of bad marriages
- greater sexual freedom
- changes are good
- the problems are mainly of adjustment

## **Functionalist**

Society's institutions must be stable, if they are to perform the critical task and functions that enable the society to work smoothly.

- role of family on socialization, i.e. mother teaches kids social norms

- search for personal fulfilment has hurt the family
- deprivation of children, leads to anomies, less supervision, etc. drug abuse, juvenile delinquency
- leads to violence in family - which leads to violent children or with psychological problem.
- Family counselling is the solution.

## **PROBLEMS OF EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY**

- Inefficiency and lagging productivity
- Pie should be shared among the population
- But what happens is that an individual takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  and the rest (say 20 others) share the other half.
- Then the rest will get about  $\frac{1}{40\text{th}}$  of cake.
- The size of pie left determine the size of piece each gets.

Another factor which determines size of pie is:

- The size of the cake. If cake is big the  $\frac{1}{40\text{th}}$  of the pie will give you bigger meal than it will, if the pie is small.
- Issue of efficiency and productivity have to do with how big the pie is thus:
- how much can a given society produce to be divided up among that society
- the more efficient and productive society then the larger is the cake
- society has a given amount of human and other resources called inputs
- if it is efficient and productive, it will produce a lot of inputs that can be shared
- if inefficient, then it cannot.

Productivity - amount of output that is produced relative to input.

## **Consequences of Lagging Productivity**

If productivity declines, the average standard of living has to fall.

If it produces less with the resources it has, it will have less to go round.

Salary today is probably ten times what it was say 10 years ago but adjusting for inflation, the purchasing power has decreased.

The actual Naira wages went up, but inflation went up faster so that in terms of purchasing power, wages actually fell.

### **Why is Nigeria's Productivity Growth Lagging**

- (1) Lack of national commitment to productivity.
- (2) Lack of effective incentives for workers to be productive.
- (3) Heavy spending by the government that does not result in productive activity.
- (4) Large Federal deficits which also cause shortage in funds for investments.
- (5) Inefficient bureaucracies both government and private.
- (6) Growth in administration and services not linked to productivity.
- (6) Reduced quality of public education resulting in poor job skills.
- (7) Lack of accountability.

### **EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

People are quick to turn to education when they look for solutions to social problems. For example, it is often said that "education is the answer".

This is a clear indication that people generally have faith that more and better education can offer answer to many of our problems.

But questions are now being asked about the ability of the educational system (institution) to provide answers to the myriads of problems confronting society today.

Some question if the educational system actually provides job opportunities for the majority. It is claimed that rather the system makes it harder for the poor and disadvantaged to get ahead. Others argue that the system is no longer working very well for anyone since the standards have fallen drastically over the years. Another example has to do with the rising rate of examination malpractice.

### **The Order Perspective and Social Problems**

The popular view is that education is the avenue for mobility (upward) - this means that it offers the poorest the means to learn what they need to gain better life. The idea is that if people could get education, they could escape from poverty and its implications.

Recall that one assumption held by the functionalist is that unequal income exists because certain more difficult jobs require more training than others. Thus, to ensure that the most capable people do such jobs they should be paid more.

Another assumption is that the educational system selects and advances people according to their capability and accomplishments. Thus, if it does not do this, the system could not allocate the most capable people to the most demanding jobs.

In short, the educational system must be meritocracy – that is, work to advance people according to what they achieve and not be influenced by anything else.

In its eyes, the educational system rewards and advance people on the basis of Achieved Statuses not ascribed status.

It goes further:

- (a) to show that the educational system is expected to provide the mechanism for social mobility wherein all those who have the same abilities and motivations have the same chance/opportunity for success;
- (b) another important theme for the functionalists is that educational is seen as an important mechanism for socialisation. It socialises people in the values of the society.

This follows that the transmission of key social values from generation to generation in a key function of the educational system - since society needs:

- (1) consensus/order for cooperation to be possible;
- (2) it ensures that the values that emerge in the society are the ones that will best meet its needs.

### **THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE**

The conflict perspective argues that the educational system prevents mobility in that it is only the children of the wealthy and the upper-middle-class parents who generally get more and better education than the children of the working class and poor parents.

Argues that social economic class is associated with:

- (1) the grades in school

- (2) the amount of education children get
- (3) the quality of school that children attend.

While agreeing with the functionalist view that those who get more and better education get more demanding and paying jobs, they point out that those who get those jobs usually come from the middle and upper classes. In contrast, children from the poorer socio-economic backgrounds usually get more limited and poorer education which ensures that they end up in statuses that are similar to those of their parents.

Thus, for the conflict view, the way the education system is set up, does not offer much does not offer much opportunity for mobility.

Both the functionalist and the conflict theorists agree that education teaches societal values but disagree about

- (1) the values taught
- (2) the consensus of such teaching

The conflict view questions the values taught:

- says its the values of the dominant social class that are taught;
- disagrees about the meaning of consensus - says the dominant values in a society are largely those of the socially dominant groups - thus they do not reflect or represent or serve the interests of the society as a whole. In short, they serve the interest of the dominant group and what those with power in the society want them to learn. Moreover, the value-teaching aspect is more of Indoctrination.

## NATURE AND ORIGIN OF SOCIOLOGY

Human beings are born into and spend their entire lives within groups. As such human beings can be described as social animals who are dependent upon others for the satisfaction of their needs. Starting from infant to childhood to adulthood, groups give meaning and support to individuals.

Sociology stresses:

- (1) human interaction
- (2) the groups which people form
- (3) and the relationships which occur
- (4) with groups

Sociology is not concerned with the study of human beings as an "isolated" individual; rather, it is concerned with the study of people in the group or social context.

The major goal of sociological inquiry is therefore that of the explanation and understanding of human social behaviour or interaction as well as the results of human interactions.

Sociologically, much of human behaviour is learned through interaction with others. It is through human interaction that man the biological animal becomes a human social animal.

In short, it is through relations with others that the individual derives values, attitudes, beliefs and standards of behaviour.

Thus, much of behaviour can only be explained in terms of relationships with others and what has been learned from others.

Thus, human behaviours are tied to the idea that social interactions among individuals cause or at least greatly influence human behaviour.

Human interaction is a social concept in that it necessarily involves two or more people/persons relating to and influencing one another.

Sociological study is thus focused upon:

- (1) the nature of human group life
- (2) and the products of group living

### **Symbolic Interactionist View**

The symbolic interactionist view is traced to the Scottish philosophers of the eighteenth century who noted that people evaluate their conduct by comparing themselves with others.

## **Symbols and Everyday Life**

Symbolic interaction studies how people use symbols to establish meaning, develop their views of the world and communicate with one another.

Believes that without symbols, our social life will be no more sophisticated than that of animals.

For example, without symbols we would have no aunts or uncles, employers or lecturers or even brothers or sisters.

Strange? Symbols define for us what relationships are. Even though there would still be reproduction, but there would be no symbols to tell us how we are related and to whom. Also we would not know to whom we owe respect and obligations, or from whom to expect privilege. For example, if you think of somebody as you aunt or uncle, you behave in certain ways, but if you think of that person as your girlfriend or boyfriend, you behave quite differently. It is symbol that tells you how you are related to others and how you should act toward them.

Apart from allowing relationships to exist, symbols also allow society to exist.

- No symbol, no coordination of our actions with those of other people.
- No plans for a future date, times and place
- Unable to specify time, materials, size or goals.
- Unable to build bridges and highways
- No moves or musical instruments
- No hospitals, government or religion
- No classroom - nobody either

In fact, symbolic interactionist analyse how our behaviours depend on the ways we define ourselves and others by studying face-to-face interactions, looking at how people work out their relationships and make sense out of life and their place in it.

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Functionalist assumes that people generally agree on most important societal concerns - freedom and security and that government should fulfil these important issues.

Government serves to socialise people to be good citizens, regulates economy so that it operates effectively and provide necessary services for citizens i.e.

- (1) government maintains law and order
- (2) plans society and coordinates other institutions
- (3) meets social needs
- (4) handles welfare

When people do not agree on specific issues or concerns, the functionalists say that divergent viewpoints lead to political pluralism - that is when competing interests or viewpoints arise, government arbitrates. Thus power is widely dispersed throughout many competing interest groups in our political system.

### **Conflict**

Believes that democracy is an ideal, not a reality in our society today because the government primarily benefits the wealthy and the politically powerful (especially the business elites).

In short, the politically powerful, economic and political elites use the power of government to impose their will on the masses.

According to the elite model, power in the political system is concentrated in the hands of a small group, whereas the masses are relatively powerless.

That is:

- (1) Elites possess the greatest wealth, education status and other resources and make the most important decisions in society.
- (2) Elites generally agree on the basic values and goals for the society.
- (3) Power is highly concentrated at the top of the pyramid-shaped social hierarchy, and those at the top set public policy for everyone.
- (4) Public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elite, not those of the ordinary people.
- (5) Elites use the media to shape the political attitude of the ordinary people.

The corporate rich, the highest paid CEO of major corporations are the most powerful because they have the unique ability to use their vast economic resources to influence political power. Also, the next most powerful level is occupied by Senate, special interest groups and local opinion leaders. The lowest of the pyramid is occupied by ordinary people and the unorganised masses who are relatively powerless and materials for economic and political exploitations.

Individuals in the power elite have similar class backgrounds and interests and interact on a regular basis. They tend to shift back and forth between and among the business, government and the military sectors. Thus, it is not unusual for people who have served in the president's cabinet to become directors of major corporations that do business with the government, for powerful business people to serve in cabinet, or for former military leaders to become important business people. Through such political and economic alliances, people in the power elite can influence many important decisions, including how tax money will be spent and to whom lucrative subsidies and joint contracts will be awarded.

### **Solution**

- (1) Some analysts feel that the only way to overcome problems in politics and the economy is to change the system.
- (2) Curb the abuses of capitalism and the market economy and thereby reducing the power of the political and economic elites.

In short, government, not the market forces should look after the interest of the common man/woman.

### **Symbolic Interactionis Perspectives and Education**

Functionalist examine the relationship between the functions of education and problems in schools and the conflict theorists focus on how education perpetuates inequality, symbolic interactionists study classroom dynamics and how practices such as labelling affect students' self concept and aspiration.

They believe that education is an integral part of socialisation. Through formal structure of schools and interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, students develop a concept of self that lasts long beyond their schooling. Overall, social interaction in school can be either positive or negative. When students learn, develop and function effectively, their experience is positive.

Negative labels lead to self fulfilling prophesies.

### **EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

- Poor children attend poorly funded schools usually in poor neighbourhoods.

- Experience - poor teaching in many classrooms and high dropout rates.

Education is the social institution by which society transmits knowledge - including basic facts and job skills, as well as cultural norms and values to its members.

Worldwide parents and others in local communities join together to teach young people important knowledge and skills.

One important type of education is schooling - formal instruction carried out by specially trained teachers. While education occurs everywhere, schooling is far more available to young people living in high-income parts of the world than those living in low-income regions.

Literacy - the ability to read and write encourages economic growth particularly as training is replaced with industry service and work.

High illiteracy rates mean low quality of life for hundreds of millions of people i.e. poor nutrition and health for mothers and children. Most mothers end up having more children than they can sustain.

### **Functionists**

Schools should promote good citizenship and upward mobility.

Problems caused by social disorganisation rapid social change and the organisational structure of schools - looks at the relationship between the functions of education and problems in schools.

### **Conflict**

School perpetuates inequality. Problems in education are the results of biases based on tribal/ethnic and religious values.

### **Symbolic Interactionist**

Focus on micro-level problems in school such as communication and teachers expectation. It is interested in how these affect students' levels of achievement and drop-out rates.

Studies the classroom dynamics and how practices such as labelling affect student's self concept. For example, it is observed that the way the teacher perceives students is an important determinant of their performance and success in life. That is, students who are encouraged or viewed positively, ended up doing better in life.