SYM 101 SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT

UNIT: 2

TOPIC: COMMUNITY

Content

- Concept of Community
- Elements of Community
- Features of Community
- Comparison between society and community

Meaning of Community

Etymological Meaning : Community (Com + Munis) To serve together

In Sociology community is basically derived from the work of F. Tonnies

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

Understanding of Community

Organic Concept

Ecological Concept

Organic Concept of Community

Belongingness
Interdependance
Close Relations

Gradual Evolution
Holistic Approach
Voluntary Participation

Common interest
Hierarchy
Contrast with Atomistic Societies

Ecological Concept of Community

TERRITORIAL FEATURES

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Definitions of Community

- **Max Weber** – By community he means that members "known to each other" and have a degree of common consciousness and identity and excluded those unlike themselves.

- **MacIver and Page** writes : " Wherever the members of any group- small or large- live together in such a way that they share, not this or particular interest, but the basic condition of life, we called that group a community." At other place he defined it as " a strongly knit group occupying a single geographical area and living a common life".

Definitions of Community

- **Bogardus-** "A Community is a social group with some degree of we-felling and living in a given area".

- **Dotson-** " A community is a spatial or territorial unit of social organisation in which people have a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging".

- **Kingsley Davis-** " Community is the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life."

Definitions of Community

- **Robert E Park:** " Community in the broadest sense of the term, has a spatial and a geographical connotation".

- **Mike O' Donnel** has analyzed the various definition of community and grouped them into three categories:

A. Fixed Locality

B. Social System

C. Quality of Relationship

Elements of Community

MacIver and Page has explained there are two major elements of Community

Locality

Community Sentiments

Characteristics of Community

Group of People

Naturalistic

Permanence

Likeness

A Particular Name

Spontaneous

Common life

Common Interest

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: Ferdinand Tönnies' Dichotomy of Social Life

- Ferdinand Tönnies, a foundational figure in sociology, introduced the seminal concepts of Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society or association) in his influential work Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887).

- These terms represent an ideal-typical dichotomy, a theoretical framework for understanding the fundamental shifts in social organization as societies transitioned from pre-industrial to industrial forms.

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: Ferdinand Tönnies' Dichotomy of Social Life

- Tönnies argued that these concepts capture the contrasting nature of social relationships, motivations, and the very essence of human association in different societal contexts. They are not simply descriptions of specific historical periods but rather **analytical tools to understand the underlying principles that shape social life.**

Gemeinschaft: The Essence of Community

- Often translated as "community," embodies a form of social life characterized by close-knit, intimate, and personal relationships.

- It is rooted in a feeling of genuine belonging, mutual understanding, and shared sentiment.

Gemeinschaft: The Essence of Community

- These relationships are often **affective** (based on emotion), **traditional** (based on custom and habit), and **expressive** (valued for their own sake).

- Membership in a Gemeinschaft is often **ascribed** (based on birth, kinship, or shared locality) rather than achieved.

Gemeinschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Relationships:** Characterized by intimacy, emotional depth, and personal knowledge. Individuals see each other as whole persons, not merely as means to an end. Interactions are frequent, informal, and extend across various aspects of life.

Gemeinschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Basis of Unity:** Social cohesion stems from shared traditions, customs, values, beliefs, and a strong sense of collective identity. Individuals feel a natural bond based on common ancestry, shared experiences, and a sense of "we-ness."

Gemeinschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Social Control:** Social order is maintained through informal mechanisms such as customs, traditions, moral obligations, public opinion, and kinship ties. Deviance is met with social disapproval, gossip, and informal sanctions aimed at restoring harmony within the group.

Gemeinschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Division of Labor:** The division of labor is relatively simple and less specialized. Individuals often engage in a variety of tasks, and roles are often defined by age, sex, and kinship.

- **Social Change:** Social change is slow and gradual, as traditions and customs are deeply ingrained and resistant to rapid alteration.

- Examples: Traditional rural villages, close-knit families, long-standing friendships, tightly bound religious communities.

Underlying Principles of Gemeinschaft

- Tönnies argued that Gemeinschaft arises from a sense of **"natural will"** (Wesenwille), an inherent and instinctive inclination towards communal life and shared existence. This natural will manifests in three primary forms:

- **Blood:** Kinship ties and the feeling of shared ancestry form the most fundamental basis of Gemeinschaft. Family relationships are the prototypical example, characterized by deep emotional bonds and mutual obligations.

Underlying Principles of Gemeinschaft

- **Place:** Shared locality and a sense of belonging to a particular place (village, neighborhood) create a sense of community. Proximity fosters frequent interaction, shared experiences, and mutual familiarity.

- **Mind:** Shared beliefs, values, traditions, and common worldview bind individuals together in a "community of mind." Ex: Religious communities, guilds with shared craft, or groups united by strong ideological convictions.

Gesselschaft: Realm of Association

- Gesellschaft, often translated as **"society" or "association,"** represents a form of social life characterized by impersonal, instrumental, formal and contractual relationships, rational self-interest.

- It emerges in more complex, urbanized, and industrialized societies where individuals are increasingly independent and pursue their own self-interests.

Gesselschaft: Realm of Association

- Relationships are often **rational** (based on calculation of costs and benefits), **contractual** (based on explicit agreements), and **instrumental** (valued as means to achieve individual goals).

- Membership in a Gesellschaft is typically achieved through **voluntary association** based on shared interests or goals.

Gesselschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Relationships:** Characterized by impersonality, superficiality, and a focus on specific roles and functions. Individuals interact with each other primarily as means to achieve their own ends, rather than as whole persons. Interactions are often formal, fleeting, and limited to specific contexts.

Gesselschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Basis of Unity:** Social cohesion is maintained through rational agreements, contracts, laws, and formal institutions that regulate interactions and protect individual rights. Shared interests or goals often form the basis of association.

Gesselschaft: Key Characteristics

Social Control: Social order is primarily maintained through formal mechanisms such as laws, police, courts, and bureaucratic regulations. Deviance is treated as a violation of codified rules and is met with formal sanctions.

Division of Labor: The division of labor is highly complex and specialized. Individuals occupy specific roles and are interdependent through a vast network of exchange.

Gesselschaft: Key Characteristics

- **Social Change:** Social change is rapid and dynamic, driven by innovation, competition, and the pursuit of individual and collective interests within a framework of formal rules.

- **Examples:** Modern cities, corporations, political parties, voluntary organizations based on specific goals.

Underlying Principles of Gesellschaft

- Tönnies argued that Gesellschaft arises from **"rational will"** (Kürwille), a deliberate and calculated form of volition where individuals make choices based on their perceived self-interest and rational assessment of means and ends.

- This rational will leads to the formation of associations based on mutual benefit and contractual agreements.

The Ideal-Typical Nature and the Transition

- It is crucial to understand that Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are ideal types, representing pure forms of social organization that are rarely found in their entirety in real-world societies. Instead, most societies exhibit a mixture of both, with the balance shifting as societies modernize and industrialize.

The Ideal-Typical Nature and the Transition

- Tönnies saw the transition from predominantly Gemeinschaft-like social structures to more Gesellschaft-like ones as a defining characteristic of modernity. This transition involves:

- **The erosion of traditional bonds**

- **The rise of individualism**

- **The increasing importance of formal institutions**

- **The expansion of the market economy**

Comparison between society and community

Society is a web social relationship. But community consists of a group of individuals. It is a specific group.

Society is abstract. Community is concrete.

A definite geographical area is not necessary for society. But a definite geographical area is essential for a community. It is bound by the territorial units.

❖ There can be more than one community in a society. Most societies consist of more than one community, varying in size, physical appearance, organization and specialized functions. But there cannot be more than one society in a community.

❖ Society is an intangible artifact. But community is a natural entity.

❖ In the society, the group is merely means to an end. But in the community, the group has a life of its own, superior to that of its temporary members. The group is an end in itself.

❖ Community sentiment or a sense of unity is not essential in a society. But community sentiment is indispensable for a community.

❖In a society the common objectives are extensive and coordinated. But in a community, the common objectives are comparatively less extensive and coordinated.

❖ In a society, the common interests and common objectives are not necessary. But in a community, a common agreement of interests and objectives necessary.

❖In the society, members have doctrine, public opinion, contractual solidarity and individual will. But in the community, members have faith, customs, natural solidarity and a common will.

Thankyou