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An identity is what “I am” or “we are”, “he is” or “they are”. The “I” and “we” similarly “he” and “they” is neither independent/autonomous social product nor remain fixed forever. One’s identity is constructed through the processes of interaction, and daily engagement both with the local and global society. These processes of construction get widely influenced by the social and cultural institutional arrangements of the society like the caste, religion and ethnicity, class, political party, state and the like. Thus the process of identity construction get negotiated both with the localised conditionalities, historical experiences and inter connections with the wider society. It is a complex and dynamic process through which individual collective self

gets constructed, reformed and rejuvenated. Hence the summations of identity represent the collective self. Generally speaking human beings are born in society and societal conditions widely shape the identity.

Society, Self and Identity :- The issues of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ are frequently used in the symbolic-interactionist theories. To them ‘self reflects society’, i.e., ‘society shapes self which shapes social behaviours. Society however is not a homogenous undifferentiated identity. It is having eclectic dimension. Hence the structural symbolic–interactionist visualises societies as ‘highly differentiated yet organised systems of interactions and relationships encompassing a wide variety of crosscutting lines based on social class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion and more’. Here ‘self’ must be seen as ‘multifaceted, as comprised of a variety of parts that are sometimes interdependent and sometimes independent of other parts, sometimes mutually reinforcing and sometimes conflicting and that are organised in multiple ways. Self is conceptualised as sets of discrete identities or internalised role designations. It is also argued that identity varies in their salience. That a given

identity can be invoked in a variety of situations or it ‘can be defined as differential probability’. Thus choice between or among behaviours expressive of particular roles will reflect the relative location of the identities associated with those roles.

Culture and Identity :- Philosophically identity is not a universal but a culture-specific discursive construction. Hall talks about cultural identity that is formed continuously: ‘Cultural identity is not an essence but a continually shifting description of us’. Hall’s argues that there is no automatic connection between various discourses of identity, namely, class, gender, race, age, etc. as they can be articulated in different ways. In this connection, the issue of multiple identities as propagated by several social scientists is highly relevant. To Barker and Galasinski (2001) ‘we may reflect on the multiple identities of the contemporary subject, that is the weaving of the patterns of identity from the discourses of class, race, gender, etc. We can thus conceive of people as operating across and within multiple subject positions constituted by

the intersections of discourses of race, gender, age, nation, class, etc.

Thus, there is an element of plasticity in the formation of identity. It is the very plasticity of identity that makes its cultural and political significance, for the shifting and changing character of identities chronicles the way that get transformed over time and as a result, they tend to be subjective construction of mainly their objectively fixed phenomena.