

**Programme:- Master in Sociology**  
**Postgraduate Department of Sociology**  
**Patna University, Patna**

**Semester-III**

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**Compulsory Paper:- C.C. 11 (SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN INDIA)**

**Unit I:- Social Disorganization and Social Problems Concepts and Theories**

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## **Causes of Social Disorganisation:-**

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Social disorganization has been and is always present in every society. As indicated above man since the dawn of civilization has been confronted with social problems of diverse nature. A society in which each structural element is functionally equilibrated with all the others is purely a hypothesis. If social disorganization is a widely prevalent phenomenon, then the question arises as to what leads to it.

### **(i) Division of Labour:**

According to Emile Durkheim, extreme division of labour is the cause of social disorganization. Division of labour is generally productive of social solidarity; but when it becomes excessive and complex then solidarity diminishes or disappears and social equilibrium is disturbed. Extreme division of labour gives rise to economic crises of all kinds, class struggles, and industrial strife, and leads to the demoralization of individuals, the family, and the community. "In short" as Koenig puts, "it produces an abnormal, anomalous situation in which the different parts do not integrate but are at cross purposes with each other and a state of normlessness."

### **(ii) Violation of Social Rules:**

According to W.I. Thomas and Znaniecki, when the rules and regulations of society fail to keep individuals under control, social disorganisation sets in. In society there are always individuals who violate social rules. This has a disorganizing effect upon social institutions, and unless the violations are checked; they may eventually lead to the death of institutions. According to Elliot and Merrill, "Without social values neither social organisation nor social disorganisation would exist."

The changes in social values come into conflict with old values. The new values take time to adjust themselves in society. In the meantime social disorganisation spreads. The Traditional social values in Indian society have undergone a major change. As a result a major conflict between the old and new values has been created. Consequently, one sees the process of social disorganisation working rapidly.

### **(iii) Industrialization:**

Industrialization creates conditions leading to social disorganisation. The effects of industrialization on family structure and relationships. Industrialization as seen in system had led to capitalism, exploitation and class conflicts. It has also contributed to unemployment, crime, immorality, family disorganisation, urbanisation and its evils.

### **(iv) Cultural Lag:**

Ogburn maintained in Social Change that disorganisation is caused primarily by the unequal rates of change in the different parts of culture, resulting in a conflict between them. The disproportionate rates of change in various elements of the functionally interdependent component system of a changing social structure produce a condition of disequilibrium. This uneven change is due to the fact that inventions and discoveries are made more frequently in certain parts of culture, usually the material parts, than in others.

Science and technology, while bringing a more efficient material culture, more knowledge, and a higher standard of living, produce social disorganisation as well. Thus Ogburn says, "When 10,000 musicians are thrown out of jobs as a result of 'canned' music through the sound film introduced in cinemas, the result is the disorganisation of orchestras, and musicians who cannot find employment."

Modern technology is changing at a rapid rate and creating important social changes with which our institutions have not yet caught up. Ogburn by analysing various social problems such as unemployment, poverty, crime, race conflict, family disorganisation and labour problems has shown that social disorganisation issues from the irregular changes of our culture.

### **(v) Natural Catastrophes:**

According to Ogburn, technological inventions, however, must not be considered the only cause of social disorganization, Ecological disturbances, i.e., disturbances in the relationship of man to his environment, including such natural phenomena as disease, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions and various other catastrophic phenomena of nature, may also have a disorganizing effect on society.

When the Black Death visited England in 1348, it is said, it destroyed between a third and a half of the entire population in a little over a year. The effect of natural catastrophes on social organisation was great in the past; at present such catastrophes are more easily controlled.

We now have more knowledge with which to control or check epidemic, to build earthquake proof houses and to dam rivers against floods. However, recent experiences with floods in India suggest that the influence of geographic factors on social organisation should not be under-estimated.

Besides natural catastrophes there may be other types of crisis too which can cause social disorganisation. Thus the sudden death of a leader may create a crisis and throw the society out of gear. The murder of Mahatma Gandhi created such a crisis for India. A crisis may become cumulative as a result of a series of events taking place from time to time, the partition of India was a cumulative crisis.

The differences between the Congress and Muslim League went on increasing, hatred between Hindus and Muslims went on aggravating and communal clashes took place from time to time. The fire of communalism gradually spread. In the end the country had to be partitioned. Both the Indian and Pakistani societies were faced with serious problems which could not be solved even to this day.

### **(vi) War:**

While war is the result of social disorganisation, it is also its cause. War disturbs the economy of a country and introduces confusion and disorder in society. War leads to scarcity. There is economic crisis

during the war period. It inflates the prices and the people resort to hoarding and black-marketing.

Further, war consumes the young men of the country. As a result young women are widowed. They are left with none to support them. That tends to weaken the sexual ties. War also affects the male-female ratio. Social values are also injured.

### **(vii) Maladaptation of Inherited Nature to Culture:**

Ogburn mentions another cause of social disorganisation and it is the lack of adaptation of man's inherited nature to the environment of group and culture. Man's nature is modified very slowly through changes in the germ plasm, whereas culture is altered with comparative rapidity.

Group life implies cooperation and respect for the rights of others, yet the aggressive, acquisitive tendencies of man are not readily accommodated to the restrictions imposed by the group. The social environment may thus impose requirements on man which he finds most difficult to fulfill. The life in modern urbanised society is highly competitive and very taxing causing many individuals to become demoralized or to suffer breakdowns.

It may also be noted that in modern societies, whereas the epidemic diseases have been brought under control, other physical disabilities, circulatory disorders, cancer and various degenerative conditions have become more common. The increase in these diseases is a product of the modern way of life.

Nervous tensions that are induced by the stresses and strains of social change are thought to be primarily responsible for much of the high blood pressure, faulty heart action and gastric ulcers. The mental disorders are also considered to be directly related to the modern way of life. It may be said that these diseases are the price that men pay for social change.

At the end, it may be said that social disorganisation is a process prevailing all over the world. In actual fact no society is completely organised. Some elements or the other of disorganisation are to be

found in every society. When these elements grow more numerous their disorganised character becomes more apparent than others.

All societies are changing rapidly accumulating numerous cultural lags at every point. In the family, in the industry, in the government, in the school and in the church a number of cultural lags can be seen.

The traditional informal controls have failed to regulate the behaviour of individuals in modern society. Many people fail to internalize a coherent system of values and behaviour controls. They become disorganised and are diagnosed as mentally ill.

It may also be referred that some sociologists regard social disorganisation as a natural process than as a malady. Maladjustment or non-adjustment of different parts of social structure may prepare a way for a new social structure to emerge. Social disorganisation may thus prove beneficial to erase the old edifice and construct a new one.

But the new structure should be erected before social disorganisation can destroy the entire social fabric. Social disorganisation is a disease of society which must be treated rapidly and effectively before it becomes chronic and destroys the social organism.