

Structure of the Nigerian Society

SOC 215



**University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development**

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Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.



Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka
Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for “Liberty and Development” for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

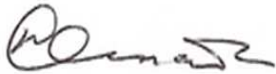
The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study,

seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bayo Okunade', written in a cursive style.

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Introduction

The course provides further introduction to Sociology with emphasis on the social system, social structure and processes. Students are introduced to Nigeria's vast diversities and how they affect social interactions and relations. It examines some of the major social institutions such as the family, education, economic religious and political institutions. Social processes such as social interactions, social change, and collective behavior are considered. The course concludes by introducing students to the meaning and types of major social problems in the Nigerian society.

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Study Session 1 Approaches to Systematic Analysis.

Expected duration: 1 week or 2 contact hours

Introduction

Looking at other social science disciplines, you will observe that sociology approaches its subject matter using tested perspectives or paradigms. These perspectives have their origin in the kind of questions that sociologists raised and how those questions were answered.

Particularly, these perspectives give the sociological enterprise its uniqueness as a discipline that recognises the relevance of understanding the realities that inform individual behaviours in group situations as the foundation for building a well-ordered society.

In other words, following these perspectives, sociologists are able to ask fundamental questions and probe into areas of human interaction that you normally take for granted by carefully studying groups, structures and institutions and how they impact, or are impacted, by individuals in the society.

Knowing what the main perspectives in sociology are will assist you in developing the attitude that you will need for systematic sociological analysis – not only in this course but in all other courses that you will come across throughout this programme.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

At the end of this Study session, you should be able to:

- 1.1 Explain what is meant by the social structure (SAQ 1.1)
- 1.2 Describe the cultivating sociological perspective (SAQ 1.2)
- 1.3 State how sociological perspectives are cultivated through curiosity and continuous questioning (SAQ 1.3);
- 1.4 Discuss consensus and conflict perspectives (SAQs 1.4)

1.1 Social Structure

A social structure is defined in several ways. The Oxford dictionary of Sociology defined it as referring to any recurring pattern of social behaviour; or as the ordered interrelationships between the different elements of a social system. It can also be seen as designating the actual arrangement of individuals and groups into those larger entities that Emile Durkheim called social facts.

It can also be defined as patterned social relations- those regular and repetitive aspects of interactions between members of a given social entity. It is a highly abstract term that covers several things and issues ranging from institutions to inter-personal relationships, stratification to unemployment, and from socialization to inequities.

The notion of 'social structure' derived from the works of the founding fathers such as Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim who conceived of the society as an organism comprising interdependent parts that form a structure similar to that of a living body.

This is referred to as the organic analogy. Karl Marx also used the term 'structure' to denote the arrangement upon which the society rests and operates, with the economic structure as the basic structure upon which all other structures rely.

An understanding of the social structure of Nigeria is, therefore, very crucial for any student of sociology as it provides a basis, if not the basis, for a scientific understanding of the Nigerian society

1.2: Cultivating Sociological Perspectives

A perspective, according to Ogunbameru (2009, p. 21), is a way of looking at the world. All sociological questions are shaped by the perspectives adopted by the sociologist doing the questioning. John J. Macionis (2008, p. 2) pointed out that what is known as *sociological perspective* is at the heart of sociology itself.

In a bid to understand the workings of groups/sub-groups and the social structures and institutions within a given society and their impacts on individuals and vice versa, sociologists employ these perspectives to interrogate observations for the sole purpose of understanding them and generating practical knowledge.

Generally, these sociological perspectives have certain characteristics that set them apart. As hinted by Hurd *et al* (1973, as cited in Ogunbameru, 2009, p. 18),

Sociological perspectives on the society are:

- ❖ Scientific in orientation and largely value neutral. This means that they adopt important scientific principles in the process of gathering and interpreting data, especially the attitude of systematic observation, hypothesis and theory generation (and testing). And unlike the humanities and arts, the sociological perspective is tilted more towards accurate description of social reality not whether that reality adheres to moral precepts or not.
- ❖ Focused principally on social relations, groups and social structures and institutions even though they recognise the importance of individuals in the scheme of things.
- ❖ Not in agreement with the view that the conditions found in the society occur randomly, but claim instead that there is some degree of regularity in social world and that the goal of sociologists is to find out what those regularities are.

Additionally, cultivating a sociological perspective also involves the use of what Wright C. Mills referred to as *sociological imagination*. As conceived by Mills, sociological

imagination is the ability to see our private experiences and personal difficulties as, in part, a reflection of structured arrangement of society and the time in which you live (Ogunbameru, 2009, p. 20).

To have sociological imagination is to think both reflectively and reflexively about the society and the social interactions that occur within it. Reflective thinking is nothing more than the ability to inculcate mental patience to completely make sense of what is observed while reflexive thinking relates to the capability of the sociologist to recognise the *realness* of the bi-dimensional relationship between social structures and individuals, in conjunction with the insight to connect seemingly unrelated events, behaviours, practices, beliefs, attitude and social action.

Thus, sociological perspectives are approaches to the study of humans as social creatures (Ogunbameru, 2009, p. 21). As you move along in this course, your first major task is to start *seeing sociologically*. According to Macionis (2008), seeing sociologically is:

- ❖ Seeing the strange in the familiar.
- ❖ Seeing personal choice in social context.
- ❖ Seeing the general in particular.

Table 1.1: Some Terms in Systematic Analysis

Terms	Meaning
Microsociology	The analysis of social relations at the microscopic or face-to-face level, usually involving micro units/small number of people.
Macrosociology	A higher level of social analysis and focuses upon large-scale and long-term social processes of organisations, institutions, and broad social patterns of state, class, family, economy, culture and society.
Facts/Social facts	Datum of experience which are used as the basis of inference.
Concepts	Abstractions based on observed facts in the social world.
Theory	A conceptual model that connects facts in social relations and used for explaining some aspects of life.

Before you go on to introduce two of the most important perspectives in the discipline sociology, there is need for you to remember that a “perspective” is not the same thing as “theory.” First of all, while a theory provides a framework for studying specific aspect of social life, a perspective is broader and more encompassing.

Secondly, several theories are incorporated in one single perspective. This does not however mean that all the theories in a perspective agree with one another. On the contrary, theories in a perspective may contradict one another (Omololu, 2009).

On the overall, sociological perspectives are recognisable by their fundamental assumptions about the human society: how it is composed, what ensures its continued existence in terms of stability and survival (Omololu, 2009).

As students of sociology, you must be able to identify and explain what sets one perspective apart from the other whenever you come across them. Let's now turn to explain the consensus and conflict perspectives.

1.3: The Consensus Perspective

Consensus perspective is one of the oldest in sociology. The fundamental idea about this perspective is that there is within a society a fundamental agreement about beliefs, values, norms and rules of social relationships which ensure the survival of the society.

The consensus perspective owes much of its origin to structural-functionalism, the sociological position that sees society as an organism whose parts – that is, **groups, structures, institutions, ideas, beliefs and practices** – work together to maintain a perfect whole. *In fact, the consensus perspective is most appropriately explained by looking at the central propositions of structural-functionalism.*



Figure 1.1 Pictures of Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Radcliffe Brown, and Talcott Parsons.

Source: www.generation-online.org/p/pdurkheim.htm

Consensus theory takes social order, stability and social regulation as the central points of emphasis, concerning itself with the continuation of order in society. The perspective holds that effective maintenance of a particular form of society is in the common interest of all its members and assumes that societies have an inherent tendency to maintain themselves in a state of relative equilibrium through the mutually and supportive interaction of their principal institutions (Sociology Index, n. d.). Put in another way, consensus perspective sees each component of the society, be it person or an institution, as operating to preserve the society as a whole (Otite & Ogionwo, 1979).

In the view of Durkheim, societies are held together by consensus or cohesion and most of the member in those societies are often in agreement about societal goals.

Durkheim believed that this consensus comes in form of solidarities: mechanical and organic solidarities.

Whereas **mechanical solidarity** refers to a form of social cohesion that is found in societies where similar values and beliefs are maintained and where people engage in similar works. **Organic solidarity**, in contrast, is found where people hold on to varying values and beliefs and engage in varying types of work but are nonetheless interdependent. And while mechanical solidarity occurs mostly in traditional, simple societies, organic solidarity is most common in urban, industrialised, and complex societies.

To explain how the elements at play as societies perpetuate themselves, Talcott Parsons, another major figure in this perspective, proposed what is now known in sociology as the AGIL framework.

The letters in the AGIL model stand for: **Adaptation**, societies have adaptive capabilities that enable them to take resources from their environment; **Goal attainment**, they also set and define goals to be attained; **Integration**, they have elements embedded within them that work to maintain internal order, and; **Latency**, societies also possess the need to generate enough motivation for tasks to be performed. Together, these elements work to ensure that the various components within a society are in unison so as to maintain order in both short and long terms.

Overall, consensus perspective conceives the interest of all groups and structures as one and the same and that each carry out its functions to better the society as whole. However, the perspective has been criticised on a number of grounds.

The first objection raised against the perspective was that it assumed that the units in the society work together for common purpose when in fact this is not always the case. Critics argue that not only do institutions work against one another; some institutions may in reality be dysfunctional.

For example, can you actually say that the institution of slavery was functional and that it was also a source of consensus (or solidarity) in the society? The answer will most likely be in the negative. Similarly, as functional as the institution of education is, you also know that it breeds sub-systems such as cultism and *Aristo* that are also dysfunctional for education and the society at large.

The second objection stems from the fact that the consensus perspective assumed what should be explained: that is to say, it assumed society as it found it without providing explanations as to its mechanisms and processes (Omololu, 2009). Merely looking at the function of an institution is only a part of the explanation; there is also a need to understand why the institution emerged in the first place.

If you are to accept the consensus perspective, how do you reconcile the fact that the legal system, which should function primary to maintain order, is also an instrument of oppression? Was the law created to maintain an ordered society or for the purpose of oppression? The consensus perspective was silent on this.

Another criticism centred on the question of social change. If groups, structures and institutions in a society work together in harmony, as consensus perspective assumed, how do you account for oppression, conflict and revolutions? While the proponents of consensus were able to explain social cohesion, the presence of conflicting social relations that often bring about societal changes were not accommodated in the paradigm. The conflict perspective emerged as a result of some of these short coming.

- From the sociological perspectives on society, List the terms responsible for systematic analysis.
- Microsociology, Macrosociology, Fact/ Social facts, Concepts and Theory.

1.4: The Conflict Perspective

Conflict perspective viewed the society differently. Unlike the harmonious picture that was painted by the consensus perspective, this second perspective takes seriously the underlying conflict that characterise most of human social interactions. The original formulation of the conflict perspective emerged from the work of Karl Marx. Marx believed that conflict was natural in social relations and it is one of the most permanent realities in the society as groups with different economic and other interests and roles interact in the society (Otite & Ogionwo, 1979).

The focus of this perspective is on the division within the society. It takes as its starting point the fact that social actors try to place their own self-interest above that of others, whether as individuals or as groups. Following Marx therefore, proponents of conflict perspective view society as an embodiment of contrasting/conflicting interests, and sometimes irreconcilable differences, that permanently place social change at the front step of all society.

Rather than defend the status quo or avoiding the reality of change, the conflict perspective challenges the status quo and embrace social change. Also, the rich and powerful in the society were viewed by conflict theorists as oppressive and exploitative, a view which departed greatly from the positive view of the rich in the sociological perspective of consensus.

However, it must be noted that not all the scholars that contributed to the development of the conflict perspective shared Marx's radical view. While scholars like Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci and Immanuel Wallerstein accommodated strong dose of radicalism in their thought, Ralf Dahrendorf and Lewis Coser were less radical.

The importance of conflict perspective for conducting systematic analysis in sociology cannot be overemphasised. Using this perspective, sociologists were able to sniff-out potentially antagonistic groups in different societies.

The patterns of relationship within and between groups were also being subjected to conflict analyses to identify points of conflicts and how society change as a result. In the end, every aspect of human society – from social structures to social institutions of the family, politics, economy and religion – have conflicting tendencies.

Meanwhile, conflict perspective has been criticised for its negative/pessimistic view of the society. Since conflict theorists question the stated intention or purpose of social institutions and proclaim that all and everything that is reflected in the structure of the society represent the interest of the powerful, explaining rights movements, democracy, civil society and other seemingly positive occurrences will be very difficult.

Also, conflict may not be the primary force in the society as this second perspective would have us believe. As explained by Otite and Ogionwo (1979), conflict perspective thrive on the existence of divisions – in terms of class struggle, racial conflict, political divide, employee-employer/student-teacher struggle – but this does not mean that society ceases to exist and not all societies go into complete disintegration.

- Given what you have learned so far, what purpose do you consider to be the role of religion in Nigeria? Is it working for the benefit of the society or it is an instrument in the hand of the powerful against the masses?
- This question cannot be answered in one particular way. The answer you provide will be shaped by one or both of the perspectives you have encountered in this Study session 1.

1.5: Consensus and Conflict Perspectives as Tools for Systematic Analysis

From what we have explained up to this point, you must have observed that the perspectives and proponents of consensus and conflict approaches have their unique strengths and weaknesses. Although they both aimed at social explanation, the kind of questions they raised led to opposing answers, with one emphasising solidarity and cohesion while the other one placed conflict at the centre of social relations. But regardless of their divergent views on society, you must remember that they remain at the core of systematic analysis in sociology.

They shape the way that you approach our subjects in sociology and influence how you interpret data. When you cultivate the sociological perspective, as is outlined in the first part of this study session, you will be equipped with the skills needed to identify the perspective that a particular sociologist had adopted and, perhaps, anticipate their conclusion.

Summary for this Study Session 1

In this Study session 1, you have learnt that:

1. Every discipline operate using one perspective or another and sociology is not an exception;
2. It is important for students of sociology to cultivate sociological perspectives by being systematic in observing the social world, being reflective, reflexive and seeing things in new light and by connecting events that seem unconnected or random on the surface;
3. Consensus and conflict perspectives are the most popular in sociology. Whereas the former viewed the structures and groups within the society as working towards the common good of the society, the latter argued instead that conflict was the primary force in social encounters and relationships. But in spite of their divergence, they are both crucial in systematic sociological analysis.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study session 1

Now that you have completed this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering the following questions. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this study session.

SAQ 1.1 (Tests learning outcome 1.1)

Briefly explain in your own term what you understand by sociological perspective.

SAQ 1.2 (Tests learning outcome 1.2)

How can you cultivate sociological perspective?

SAQ 1.3 (Tests learning outcome 1.3)

What is the central argument of consensus perspective?

SAQ 1.4 (Tests learning outcome 1.4)

What do you consider to be the strength of the conflict perspective?

Study Session 2 Aspects of Nigeria's Diversity

Expected duration: 1 week or 2 contact hours

Introduction

Diversity describes observable or unobservable heterogeneity within groups, organizations or a whole society. It could also refer to ethnic, gender, age or other forms of variety in a culture or an institution (Lewis, 2009).

Modern Nigeria is diverse in many respect and as you shall see in this Study session, the social structure of the Nigerian society is shaped, and constantly being reshaped, by this diversity, whether expressed as ethnicity, language, religion and other cultural differences or through Spatio-geographic or population-based dynamics.

Aspects of Nigeria's diversity that will be covered in this Study session include: geography, in terms of climate, topography and vegetation; population structure and distribution; socio-cultural diversity, with particular focus on ethnicity, language and religion. The impact of these diversities on the social structure of Nigeria is also explored.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 2.1 Highlight the Geographical Characteristics of Nigeria (SAQ 2.1)
- 2.2 Describe the Population Structure of Nigeria (SAQ 2.2)
- 2.3 Explain the Socio-Cultural Diversity of Nigeria (SAQ 2.3)
- 2.4 Discuss ways in which these diversities are impacting the Nigerian Society.

2.1: The Geography of Nigeria

Nigeria occupies a land mass of 923,768 square kilometres and bordered in the west by Benin, Chad and Niger in the north, Cameroon to the east, and approximately 800 kilometres of the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Officially created in 1914 by the British Colonialist through the amalgamation of Northern Protectorate and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, Nigeria is the most populous nation on the African continent with an estimated population of 163 million in 2010 (NBS, 2012).

The first expression of the Nigeria's diversity is in her physical environment, with variety of climate, topography, vegetation, highlands, water bodies and other geographical

features. The highlands stand from 600 to 1,300 metres in the north central and the east highlands, while the lowlands of less than 20 metres in the coastal areas extend from Sokoto to Borno in the north, to coastal lowlands in the West and the Cross River basin in the east (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009).



Figure 2.1: Shows the Geography of Nigeria.
Source: Distance Learning Centre (U.I)

Nigeria's climate is tropical and marked by strict wet and dry seasons which are experienced with different degrees of intensity as one move from the south of the country to the north. The two seasons are associated with the activities of two dominant winds; the southerly wind which brings the rain, and the cold, dry, and dusty north easterly winds commonly referred to as the Harmattan.

Also, the southern part of the country experience a high volume of annual rainfall (up to 4,000 mm in some area) and the temperature is almost constant throughout the year (between 26 °C and 28 °C in Warri town) – as compared with north where temperature can be up to 40°C and rainfall of may be less than 600 mm per annum.

Table 2.1: Geographical Features of Nigeria

TOPOGRAPHY (Plains and Plateaus)		VEGETATION			Location
<i>Major Uplands</i> Lake Chad Basin Sokoto Plains Niger-Benue Jos Plateau Adamawa Highlands Obudu, Plateau Ibadan Hills	<i>Major Lowlands</i> Coastal Lowlands Cross River Basin Sokoto Plains Borno Plains	Rainforest	Rainforest	General east-west strip across southern Nigeria whose average width is approximately 130 km.	
			Fresh water swamp	Upper Niger Delta and coastal strip from Port Harcourt to Lagos.	
			Salt water swamp	Lower Niger Delta and southeast Nigeria around the city of Calabar.	
		Savannah	Guinea	Largest vegetation zone lies just north of the rain forest and reaches northward as far Lake Kanji, Zaria, and the Benue River in the East.	
CLIMATE		Savannah	Sudan	North of the guinea savannah, covering most of the rest of Nigeria.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tropical, hot and humid country.• Wet & Dry/Harmattan Seasons• Temperature can reach a low of 26 °C to a high of 40°C, depending on the geographical region• Rainfall ranges from 600 mm in the north to 4,000 mm in the south.			Sahel	Covers a small pocket of Nigeria that borders lake Chad.	
			Montane		Parts of the eastern highlands bordering Cameroon and parts of the Jos Plateau.

As shown in the table above, Nigeria has three distinct vegetation; **Viz. Rain Forest, Savannah and Montane.**

The Montane is rarely discussed because the rain forest and savannah account for most of the country's vegetation. The level of concentration of trees is the main distinguishing characteristic between rain forest and savannah vegetation. Trees are closer and more concentrated in forest than in savannah where trees are widely spaced. Marked by different layers of tree cover, forest also contained small amount of grass covers – in sharp contrast to savannah regions where grasses of varying heights are more pronounced.

The difference between these two vegetation, their types, based on the list in Fig. 2.2, and the gradation of their level of intensity in each regions across Nigeria are noticeable as one move from the south where rain forest predominate to the north where few, widely spaced trees marked the start of the savannah to northernmost shrubby area known as *Sahel savannah*.

2.1.1: Geography and Social Structure

You must be wondering what the relevance of the geography of Nigeria is to the understanding of social structure. You may have even asked yourself why a sociologist, in a bid to comprehend the structure of the society, would be interested in a topic that may be best suited for a human geographer. Do not wonder too much because the environment is as important for the sociological study of societal structure as it is for the geographical study of human settlement.

First of all, the dominant pattern of economic activity, an important component of social structure, is often determined by the geographical characteristics of a place. It is not an accident that some particular crops do better in some regions than in others.

Occupations that were indigenous to some communities in Nigeria are also products of what material is available for production purposes. Again, certain farming activities, particularly crop production and cattle rearing, became traditional among the northern people because their natural environment permitted it.

Similarly, the presence of thick layers of trees in rainforest reduced the possibility of intensive farming activity in the southernmost regions. Relatedly, the periodic, often temporal, variation in the urban population in south-western states and the accompanying socio-economic changes, due to the migratory activities of the Hausa people, may have been a result of climatic constraints – short seasonal rainfall in this case – which usually prevent agricultural labourers from farming all-year round.

In short, the economic relations of production that exist in different regions of Nigeria are largely determined by available resources. Hence, there is no way you can ignore the fact that geography play some roles in the structural arrangement that is currently in place here in Nigeria.

2.2: Population

Nigeria has been experiencing uncontrolled population growth for some time now. In the first four decades after 1911, the population almost doubled from 14.9 to 30.3 million by 1952. As shown in *Figure 3*, that figure later rose to about 90 million in 1991, and to more than 162 million in 2011.

Recently, the Director-General of National Population Commission, Jamin Dora Zubema, stated that Nigeria's population is estimated at over 167 million, making it the 7th most populated country in the world. By 2050, the population of the country would, at 433 million, be second only to India and China, surpassing the United State, Indonesia, Brazil and Pakistan who currently hold the 3rd to 6th positions in that order (*see Fig.4*).

Table 2.2: Demographic Indicators, Nigeria 1963-2011 (*National Population Commission (as cited in Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2008); National Bureau of Statistics (2009); Population Reference Bureau (2011)*)

Indicators	Census 1963	NFS 1981-1982	Census 1991	Census 2006	PRB Mid-2011
Population (m)	54.7	83.7	88.9	140.4	162.3
Density (pop./sq.km)	60	92	96	150	U
% Urban	19	23	35.3	u	51
Crude birth rate (CBR)	66	46	43.6	u	41
Crude death rate	27	16	14	u	16
Total fertility rate (TFR)	U	5.3	4.9	u	4.7
Infant mortality rate (IMR)	U	85	93	u	89
Life expectancy at birth	36	48	53.2	u	52

u = Unknown (not available)

The above is solely a consequence of the phenomenon known as **population momentum**, which refers to the unavoidable growth in population even if the level of child-bearing declines to replacement level.

Table 2.3.Indicates the most populated countries in world (*Population Reference Bureau (2011)*)

2011			2050		
COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS)		COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS)	
China	1,346	1	India	1,692	
India	1,241	2	China	1,313	
United States	312	3	Nigeria	433	
Indonesia	238	4	United States	423	
Brazil	197	5	Pakistan	314	
Pakistan	177	6	Indonesia	309	
Nigeria	162	7	Bangladesh	226	
Bangladesh	151	8	Brazil	223	
Russia	143	9	Ethiopia	174	
Japan	128	10	Philippines	150	

National Bureau of statistics (2012); Population Reference Bureau (2011)

2.2.1: Youth and Population

Particularly, the youthful structure of the Nigerian population has been on the agenda in the last couple of years. Today, the median age in Nigeria is 19.5 years and a high percentage of the population, about 44% (40.9% of ages 0-14 and 3.1% of ages 65 years and over), are dependent on the 54.9% that currently constitute the workforce of Nigeria (CIA World Factbook, 2012).

The reality of a high and youthful population poses different set of challenges to the Nigerian society. For instance, a high population of dependents means that more people would need food, housing and other basic social infrastructures to live well. Presently, food crisis looms large in the country.

Also, a youthful population requires considerably high investment on the part of the government, particularly in the area of education, health, employment and general human capital development. As Zubema (2012, p. 1) observed, “Adolescents and Youths constitute the stock of

Nigeria's present and future pride, leaders, workforce, parents, strength, hope, prosperity, opportunities, development, progress, existence, peace and security as well as a huge challenge to overcome and reap the benefits associated with their potentials.”

With current state of the Nigerian economy, none of this would be achieved if the population is not checked. Ostensibly, providing social infrastructures to enable the youths reach their full potential has economic implications for the country as a whole and would, for this same reason, bring their interest in conflict with the interest of other elements within the society, especially children, elderly and middle-age groups.

Some Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Correlates of High Population Rate in Nigeria

- ❖ Nigeria has a high rate of poverty, with incidence level of 26.2% in 1980; 45.3% in 1985; 42.7% in 1992; 64.6% in 1996; 53.4% in 2004; 69.0% in 2010.
- ❖ Total fertility rate is high at 4.7, beating regional average of 4.5% for West Africa, as well as the average rate of the African continent (3.7%) and the world (2.5%).
- ❖ The culture of male preference is still prevalent in the country.
- ❖ Use of contraception is still low among Nigerian, especially among women whose lack of freedom over their economic and reproductive life remains a challenge. Only 15% of women aged 15-49 use at least one method of contraception while the modern method is used by just 10%
- ❖ Nigeria is rated among the countries in the world where 25 – 49% of the total population of girls will marry before reaching age eighteen. A girl that marries

at 18 or less has a longer period of parturition than those who marry at a much later age.

2.2.2: Rural-Urban Population Trend

Nigeria is experiencing rapid urbanization. Although human migration is nothing new, the rate of movement of people from rural to urban centres in recent time is unprecedented. In 1970, about 80% of Nigerian population was resident in rural areas, and majority of this percentage were involved in agriculture.

However, urban resident has increased to 48% in 2004 (Afolabi, 2007); and growing at 3.1% per annum, over 66% of them were estimated to be living in slums. Recent estimate is that the urban population has risen to more than 50%, implying that Nigerians are equally divided between rural and urban areas. Suffice it to note that this does not imply that rural-urban migration is the only factor influencing urban population increase; in fact, natural rate of increase is topmost (Central Bank, 1999).



Figure 2.2: Shows the Trend of Rural-Urban Migration

Source: <http://futurechallenges.org/local/news/a-dormant-volcano-inter-state>

The rate at which any urban centres would grow is often dependent on demographic, political, socio-cultural, economic and technological factors (Central Bank, 1999, p. 2). While development in transport and communication system speed up movement and make migration cheaper, the promise of economic prosperity has been a critical incentive prompting human migration.

Meanwhile, more young able-bodied formed a substantial part of the swelling population of urban centres in Nigeria (Nigeria, 2000), many of whom were hitherto involved in agriculture. This caused serious decline of agricultural workforce in rural areas.

The out-movement of large number of people from rural areas is also causing problems in urban centres. As observed in an investigation of urbanization in the city of Ibadan, rural-urban migration leads to unemployment, poor housing conditions, environmental pollution, crimes and violence, intensifies individual and household poverty, causes disorder, perverted value system and so on (Central Bank, 1999, p. 2).

These, in addition to youth challenges explained above, as well as other population problems do impact the kind of changes that would occur in Nigeria's social institutions, particularly the family, education, politics, economy and legal system.

- Looking at the geography of Nigeria, the temperature and volume of rainfall varies in the southern and northern parts of Nigeria explain?

- The temperature in the southern is between 26°C and 28° C, while in northern Nigeria it can be up to 40°C for the rainfall. In southern part experience high volume of annual rainfall up to 4000mm, while in the northern part the rainfall may be reduce than 600mm per annum.

2.3: Socio-Cultural Diversity

Nigeria is often described as a multicultural society. It may even be claimed that the multiplicity of cultural elements such as nationality, language and belief systems constitute the greatest expression of the country's diversity. In this section, ethnicity, language and religion, as individuation of socio-cultural diversity in Nigeria, shall be explained in turn.

2.3.1: Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic groupings are at the core of Nigeria's multiculturalism and the interaction between the groups has important consequences for the society at large. Although the exact number of ethnic groups in Nigeria is still being debated, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) noted that scholars have estimated between 62 and 500 ethnic groups, making Nigeria one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world.

Traditionally, these ethnic nationalities are often divided between majority and minority groups: Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo (or Igbo) ethnic groups fall within the former while groups like Ijaw, Yakurr, Ibibio, Kanuri, Annang, Etsakor, Tiv, Efik and others are grouped in the latter.



Figure 2.3 Explains the Major Types of Ethnic Diversity.

Source: www.vanguardngr.com

Advantages of Ethnic Diversity

- It provides a sense of identity to millions of people, gives them a sense of belonging and psychological security in times of uncertainties.
- In Nigeria where the idea of national identity remains at the level of National Flag and the Anthem, ethnic groups provide needed platform for many Nigerians to compete for resources in the public sphere.
- When properly managed, ethnic diversity can be a veritable source of economic strength when properly managed for the whole society. This is true from the viewpoint of the promises of tourism. An ardent viewer of the AM Express on the National Television Authority (NTA) would certainly agree with this!
- It promotes a rich sense of cultural awareness among the members of the society.
- By tapping into the best from every group, ethnic diversity can form a solid foundation for building a dynamic and vibrant society.

Table.2.4: Some Ethnic Groups of Nigeria (*Wikipedia 2012*)

Abraka	Damakawa	Fula	Kalabari	Nupe
Afemai	Defaka	Fulani	Kamuku	Ogoni
Agbassa	Djerma	Gbagyi	Kanuri	Ogugu
Anaang	Ebira	Gokana	Kele	Oron
Ankwe	Edda	Hausa	Kilba	Saro
Anlo Ewe	Edo	Ibibio	Kirdi	Tarok
Annang	Efik	Idoma	Kofyar	Tiv
Anwain	Egba	Igala	Koma	Umuoji
Aro	Ejagham	Igbo	Kotoko	Urhobo
Atyap	Eket	Igue	Kurtey	Wodaabe
Awori	Ekoi	Ijaw	Kuteb	Yewa
Bakossi	Ekpeye	Ikpide	Longuda	Yoruba
Bali	Eleme	Ikwerre	Maguzawa	Zarma
Bariba	Emai	Isoko	Mama	
Berom	Esan	Isu	Mambila	
Bete	Etsakor	Itsekiri	Mbembe	
Boki	Ewe	Itsekiri	Mumuye	
Buduma	Fali	Iwellemmedan	Ngizim	
Chamba	Fon	Jukun	Nkoroo	

Unfortunately, integrating these diverse ethnic units has so far proved difficult. Since independence, ethnicity has proved to be very disadvantageous in Nigeria, at least for the following reasons:

- Ethnicity is highly politicized and had been very antithetical to nation-building and societal progress.
- It promotes differentiation and often leads to unhealthy identity contest.

- It is also an instrument of domination, whether of majority groups over minorities or of minorities over lesser minorities within the same state.
- Ethnicity can also be exploited, as often witnessed in Nigeria, to mobilize people towards armed conflict against their fellow neighbours.
- As you can see in Nigeria today the rate of rural- urban migration is increasing, from your own view of point. What are the causes of the migration?
- High rate of unemployment, lack of social amenities, decrease in economic activities, poor infrastructure.

2.3.2: Linguistic Heterogeneity

The cultural diversity of Nigeria is also reflected in the number of linguistic groups in the society. It is estimated that Nigeria has more than 500 linguistic groups. As at 2009, around 527 languages were identified in Nigeria, of which 514 were categorized as living languages, 2 were second languages without mother-tongue speakers while 11 had no known speakers (Lewis M. P., 2009).

Meanwhile the speakers of the living languages are not of equal proportion; whereas a few languages are spoken by majority of the people, many are spoken by only a handful and their number could be as low as 500 speakers.

As expected, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages have the highest number of speakers. These three account for about 58% of the total of languages used in the country and were officially recognized in the 1979 Nigeria Federal Constitution as “national languages,” though English was the official language.

By implication, these widely used local languages are highly restricted to, and more dominant, in a particular region. As Hausa is to the north, so is Yoruba to the south west while Igbo remained dominant in the east. It is perhaps for this reason that these languages are often used in relation to different ethnic groups such that you tend to always associate linguistic groups with ethnic groups.

In addition to the language of three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Pidgin English is also widely in use, having about 30 million speakers (Lewis M. P., 2009), though with variations in dialects of across different geographical areas.

While this language does not have a universal standard, its wide appeal and acceptability is gradually making linguistic to consider it as a viable alternative to the language challenge that the Nigeria is currently facing.

Table.2.5: Nigerian Languages with More than a Million Speakers

	Language	Popular in	Dialects	Number of Speakers
1	Yoruba	Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Kwara, and Lagos States; Kogi State	Oyo, Ijesha, Ila, Ijebu, Ondo, Wo, Owe, Jumu, Iworro, Igbonna, Yagba, Gbedde, Egba, Akono, Aworo, Bunu (Bini), Ekiti, Ilaje, Ikale, Awori	18,900,000
2	Hausa	Sokoto, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Bauchi, Jigawa, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Gombe states	Kano, Katagum, Hadejiya, Sokoto, Gobirawa, Adarawa, Kebbawa, Zamfarawa, Katsina, Arewa, Barikanchi*	18,500,000
3	Igbo	Abia, Anambra, Enugu Imo, Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi,	Owerri (Isuama), Onitsha, Umuahia, Orlu, Ngwa, Afikpo, Nsa, Oguta, Aniocha, Eche, Egbema, Oka (Awka), Bonny-Opobo, Mbaise, Nsuka, Ohuhu, Unwana	18,000,000
4	Fulfulde	East central, Taraba and Adamawa States, Yola, Sokoto. Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Jos Plateau, Bauchi, Gombe, Bornu	Kano-Katsina, Bororo (Mbororo, Ako, Nomadic Fulfulde)	9,321,000
5	Kanuri (Central & Manga)	Borno, Maiduguri, Yobe, Jigawa, Bauchi	Dagara, Manga	3,200,000
6	Tiv	Benue, Plateau, Taraba,		2,210,000
7	Anaang	Akwa Ibom state, Ikot Ekpene, Essien Udim, Abak, Ukanafun, and Oruk-Anam LGA	Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Ukanafun	1,400,000
8	Izon	Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo, Ekiti	Arogbo, Furupagha, Egbema, West Olodiana, Oporoza (Gbaranmatu), Ogulagha, Iduwini, Ikibiri, Ogboin, West Tarakiri, etc.	1,000,000
9	Edo	Bendel state, Ovia, Oredo, and		1,000,000

		Orhionmwon LGAs.		
10	Pidgin English	Southern states; Northern states in Sabon Garis; coastal and urban areas	Lagos Pidgin, Delta Pidgin, Cross River Pidgin, Benin Pidgin	30,000,000

Lewis M. P. (2009), Ethnologue <http://www.ethnologue.com>

Like ethnic diversity, multiplicity of language within the Nigerian society has its own challenges as well. The regionalized character of the most widely used tongues, and the threat it poses to the survival of smaller ones, is considered a major source of tension among linguistic groups.

This is because the question of national language would continue to be raised and only the languages with most speakers would be able to compete. Presently, some indigenous languages have disappeared while many others are under the threat of extinction, with no form of definite effort to integrate the various languages or National Policy on Language to encourage their use in homes and schools.

The continued use of the English language as lingua franca also poses its own set of threats to the society. As it is well known, language is not only used for communication, it is also a carrier of culture, consciousness, identity and history.

In this sense, the use of foreign language at the various levels of societal institutions, especially in education, means that the culture of others would continue to shape what you learn, our knowledge, and the way you perceive reality. If nothing is done to both preserve and safeguard minority languages and then begin the process of strengthening, standardizing and upgrading our widely-in-use tongues, Nigerians may likely continue to see the world through the eyes of others.

2.3.3: Religious Diversity

The Nigerian society is also multi-religious. From her distinctive multi-nation foundations of traditional or indigenous religions, the Nigerian society has been very open in accepting foreign religions and her peoples have been very creative in infusing doses of traditional elements into the new faith. Unfortunately, the society appears to have been a little too open because most of the traditional religions of Nigeria have almost vanished – in their purest state at least.

Presently, the population is mainly divided between Christians and Muslims and they, together, constitute close to 90% of the entire population. Devotes of traditional religions are marginal and their number is believed to be decreasing by the day.

According to a 2009 survey, 50.4% of Nigeria's population was Muslims but another 2011 survey estimated that Christians now form the majority of the nation, comprising

50.8% of the population while traditional religions make up 1.4% of the population (Pew Research Centre, 2011). Meanwhile, the Muslim population is expected to increase by more than 41.1 million from 2010 to 2030, thereby rising from 74.7 million in 2010 to 115.8 million in 2030.

The religious composition of Nigeria is also regional in character. A very high proportion of the Muslim population is located in the north while Christians are concentrated in the southern and Middle-Belt territories.



Figure 2.4 shows the religious diversity in Nigeria.

Source: wakeupcallnews.blogspot.com/2013/12/50-christians-burned-to-death-in.html

In the south-western Yoruba region, both Christians and Muslims are found in almost equal number, and traditional religion thrives as well. However, it must be borne in mind that there is internal diversity within these religions.

Among Nigerian Christians, you have Catholics, Methodists, Protestants, Pentecostals, Aladura, Living-faith churches and so many other groups. Some of these denominations, particularly the Aladura sect, were products of long decades of interaction between traditional way of living and foreign modes of believing.

In many of the “new school” churches, upbeat, spirited music and dance are widely used to enliven their meetings (Geographical Alliance of Iowa). Also within the Muslim communities, you can identify adherents of Sunni, Shia, or Sufi who subscribe to different variants of the Islamic doctrine.

Religious diversity has been an element of Nigeria’s dynamism for a long time. It was a source of both spiritual and moral guide for millions of people and its impact on the attitudinal dispositions of Nigerians cannot be doubted. In times of disaster, shocks, and widespread panic, religious anecdotes were often evoked by politicians, religious leaders and laypersons to ease tension and give hope to millions.

But like every other powerful instrument, religion has been exploited to cause suffering and death. Since the late 1950s, conflicts within the Nigerian society often had religious undertone. At different times, countless lives were lost to religious zealots and fundamentalist and Nigeria is a great example of a society where a line is never drawn between religious-cum-ethnic conflict and all other forms of conflict.

Examples of religiously motivated conflicts occurred in 1953, 1960s, and in the '80s and 1990s. Recently, the Boko Haram Group has been tormenting the Nigerian state and had killed many citizens, both Muslims and Christians alike, on religious frivolities.

- Look around you, in what other areas do you think Nigeria is diverse?
- In addition to aspects of ethnicity, language and religion, Nigeria's diversity is also reflected in the family and marriage systems, fashion, work pattern, crafts and such likes.

Summary of Study Session 2

You have learned in this Study Session that:

1. Nigeria is diverse in many respects, a fact that can be noticed in her geography, population structure, ethnicity, religion, language and so on.
2. Geography has implications for the economic activities that predominate in different places and may impact a change in population structure as people move when their environment no longer support their source of livelihood.
3. Nigeria has a young population and this poses a unique set of problems for the society.
4. As a multicultural society, Nigeria boasts of many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups which could be a source of strength but which are unfortunately being used to divide the people.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ) for Study session 2

Now that you have completed this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering the following questions. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Study Session.

SAQ 2.1 (tests learning outcome 2.1)

State the defining characteristics of Nigeria's geography.

SAQ 2.2 (tests learning outcome 2.2)

List at least three (3) characteristics of the structure of Nigerian population.

SAQ 2.3 (tests learning outcome 2.3)

Mention some advantages of ethnic diversity in modern Nigeria.

SAQ 2.4 (tests learning outcome 2.3)

How diverse is religion in Nigeria? Briefly explain its dynamics in the Nigerian society.

Study Session 3 Social Process and Change

Expected duration: 1 week or 2 contact hours

Through social interaction, individuals and groups within the society evolve what is known in sociology as social process. Sometimes described as recurring patterns of behaviour that commonly feature in social life, social process encompasses all the shades of variations or forms of ways of behaving that characterize human social relationship. While social processes may take some time to build up, they can be very enduring and long-lasting once established.

However, this does not mean that social process is static at any point in time as it often undergoes modification or transformation through the same human interaction that established it in the first place. When modification or transformation occurs in social processes, sociologists often say that a society (or a group or an organisation within it) is experiencing what is known as social change.

In other words, social process and change are created through endless flow of interaction between persons, groups, and institutions within the society or between different societies and cultures.

Learning Outcomes for Study session 3

In this Study session, you shall explain the meaning of social interaction as the starting-point of social process and change. At the end of this presentation, you should:

- 3.1 Define the term social interaction and explain how status, roles and norms and communication work together to form the building block for everyday interaction (SAQ 3.1);
- 3.2 Describe the sociological theories of social interaction (SAQ 3.2)
- 3.3 State the various forms of social interaction (3.3)
- 3.4 Explain the meaning and theories of social change, as well as some of the factors that influence change in the society (SAQs 3.4 and 3.5).

3.1: Social Interaction

According to Charles Horton Cooley (1981), all human societies owe their existence to social interaction and the form taken by any one society is determined by the pattern of interaction that characterize the relationship of persons and groups within it. Hence, observed Cooley (1918, p. 3), human society remains a growing whole that is unified by ceaseless currents of interaction.

When you hear people say that “No man/woman is an Island unto him/herself,” the indispensability of social interaction to the society is being affirmed. This social fact refers not only to the present but also to societies that once existed, and perhaps to those that would exist in the future.

This is the reason why sociologists, in their attempt to systematically study and understand the society, have devoted considerable effort towards the description of the meaning of social interaction and the elements that create, modify and transform different patterns of interactions.

Social interaction has been defined differently by different scholars.

For instance, John Macionis (2008, p. 142) defined it as “the process by which people act and react in relation to others.” It describes the ways and manner of acting by individuals towards others and how they also respond to the actions of other social actors in the society. To Brym and Lie (2007), social interaction also involves face-to-face verbal and non-verbal communication between people that are acting and reacting to each other.

In our day-to-day encounters with other people, be it our parents, siblings and other members of our primary groups or acquaintances, stranger and people of secondary groups, you do not act uniformly and usually react differently to what they say and do even when the speech and social act is the same. For example, children rarely direct uniformed behaviour to fathers and mothers and still a different pattern is exhibited with siblings, classmates, friends in the neighbourhood and those at school.

In the same vein, female prostitutes would most probably react approvingly to indecent/suggestive comment from male customers while a female banker that works in the customer service section may react negatively to similar comment from male clients. The reason for these variations in action and reaction is that social interaction between people is generally ordered by status, roles and norms.



Figure 3.1 Picture shows social interaction among college students.
Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/10/071029172855.htm>

3.1.1: Status

Every society fits people into position known as statuses. Statuses are part of our social identity and they help to define our relationship to other people (Macionis, 2008). Generally, status refers to the rank of individuals within the society or the socially recognized positions that are occupied by people and which are accompanied by a set of expectations, including rights and obligations (Aderinto, 2001).

In face-to-face meetings, *who a person is* (or *who you perceive him or her to be*) in relation to our own status-position is an important determinant of the form that our interaction would take. For instance, the fact that Mr. A is a Lecturer in the department of sociology would regulate the form of interaction that will occur between him and individuals that were designated students in the same department.

	Examples of Statuses
Collegial	<i>Professor, Vice-Chancellor, Student, Lecturer</i>
Family	<i>Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Aunt, Cousin,</i>
Occupational	<i>Nephew</i>
Business	<i>Lawyer, Banker, Teacher, Doctor, Trader</i>
Religious	<i>Client, Manager, Buyer, Seller</i>
Gender	<i>Preacher, Congregant, Chorister, Diviner</i> <i>Female, Male</i>

Numerous statuses exist in every society and each individual can fall into a number of statuses at a time. As shown in the above, an individual may occupy collegial, family, religious, gender and other status-positions by being a Vice-Chancellor, father, congregant, male and so on. The combination of statuses that is occupied by an individual is known to sociologists as a **status set**.

Status set tends to change as people grow older and it may also expand or reduce as you join or withdraw from certain activities (Macionis, 2008), such as when enrolment or graduation from school changes our student's status.

Distinction is also made between **ascribed** and **achieved** status. While *ascribed status is based on accidents of birth and does not depend on individual efforts*, *achieved status is not inherited or fixed at birth but based on the capabilities or efforts of individuals*.

Examples of ascribed status include the status of a daughter or son while being a lawyer or pharmacist would be an instance of an achieved status. There is also what is called **master** status which refers to the most influential status that shapes the life of an individual at any given point in time.



Figure 3.2 Various examples of statuses

Source: www.spyghana.com/market-women-asked-to-be-mindful-of-micro-finance-companies.

3.1.2: Roles

It is not enough for statuses to exist in a society. All statuses have accompanying roles that status-holders are expected to perform. These roles actually define the behaviour that is expected from occupants of status-position in real-life situations.

The status of a doctor for instance is accompanied by the role of treatment of illness while that of a nurse is followed by the role of care-giving. The main difference between status and roles is that while people *occupy* the former, they *perform* the latter (Brym & Lie, 2007).

Individuals can also combine different roles to form a cluster that is known as role set. A mother may perform the roles of emotional support provider and medical care-provider within the home while a pastor can perform the roles of preaching and counseling while also providing spiritual guidance and educating children at Sunday Schools. Furthermore, roles are relational since they are often performed in relation to other roles (Aderinto, 2001).

Therefore, the role of mother is performed in relation to the role of daughter/son, that of doctor to the role of patient, seller to buyer and so on. This relationship between roles is called **role pair**.



Figure.3.3 Explains the behaviour that is expected from occupants of status-position in real- life situations.

Source: www.absolutearts.com/artforsale/themes/Representational/Representational-4.html

Finally, in performing the roles that are attached to statuses, individuals experience **role conflict** and **role strain**. While role conflict describes the conflict among two or more statuses or when different role demands are placed on a person by two or more statuses held at the same time, role strain occurs when incompatible role demands are placed on a person in a single status (Brym & Lie, 2007; Macionis, 2008).

Given the present arrangement in Nigeria's banking sector for example, a woman may be said to be experiencing role conflict if she is a wife, a mother and a teller since the time needed to perform the first and second roles is used-up while struggling to perform the third.

A police officer on the other hand can experience occupational role strain if she must kill while performing the role of policing, though her mandate remains the protection of lives and property.

3.1.3: Norms

The generally expected rules of behaviour in the society are called norms. Societies have socially expected ways of doing things and anyone that do not follow the social rules or an individual who act discordantly to laid-down manners of behaving is tagged or perceived a *social deviant*. Norms are either **prescriptive** or **proscriptive**.

When you talk of a prescriptive norm you mean that it suggests what a person is *expected to do* while performing a particular role but proscriptive norms suggest what a person is *expected not to do* (Brym & Lie, 2007). That sons/daughters *should* kneel or bow their heads when greeting their parents, in Nigeria at least, is a prescriptive norm while the norm that says that they *should not* disrespect them is proscriptive.

Meanwhile, Brym and Lie (2007) pointed out that norms often change over time, and that although some ways of doing things are universal, others differ from situation to situation and from role to role. Norms of greeting for instance can change in homes as children grow older or become more "exposed" – that is, rather than the *normal* bowing of head or kneeling a son or daughter can substitute expressions like "good morning/afternoon/evening" in performing the role of greeting.

Examples of universal norm include the prescription that parents should protect their children from harms. Norms that vary from one society to the next may include hawking on behalf of one's parents as an expression of the prescription that *children should help their parents* in poor nations while a different pattern of behaviour is expected for a similar norm in wealthy nations.

The three social elements that were explained above are believed by sociologists to be the building blocks of all face-to-face interaction. In a sense, they are structures that fit people into social positions, define the roles that occupants must play in relation to their

statuses and prescribe (or proscribe) the rules that each occupant must adhere to in performing his/her designated roles.

The order that you observe in our everyday relationship with other members of the society, right from within the family to associates and strangers, is due to the facts of generally shared belief about statuses, our acceptance of roles that you were socialized into and how you live in accordance with societal norms.



*Figure. 3.4 Shows the two types of norms.
Source <http://wailacaan.com/2011/05/>*

3.1.4: Communication and Social Interaction

Communication is also an important aspect of social interaction. While statuses, roles and norms structure people's behaviour, communication performs facilitative function in the process of interaction within the society. The common forms of communication are two:

- ❖ Verbal form means of social interaction refers to communication that is based on the use of language, symbols and written signs,
- ❖ Non-verbal forms. Include communication using body movements, gestures, and facial expressions (Macionis, 2008).
- ❖

Language

Language is a system of symbol that allows people to communicate with one another, whether expressed as written signs or speech. As a verbal form of communication that facilitate social interaction, language is intricately linked with the culture of a people, especially due to its role in socializing people into cultures and in transmitting cultural beliefs and ideas through generations.

Language also has important consequences for everyday interaction between people by helping to construct social reality. In other words, while language aids in communicating and transmitting values, norms, ideas and perceptions and also helps in their construction.

For example, gender roles were constructed through the meanings that society gives to terms such as mother, wife, queen, princess, mistress, and madam for female and father, husband, king, prince, master and sir for male.

According to Macionis (2008), language defines men and women differently both in terms of power and value and such definition often comes to play when individuals interact with one another.

Another feature of language, as facilitator interaction, is its embeddedness social and cultural peculiarities. That is, language does not convey the same meaning in all societies. Usually, similar symbols and signs may be arranged differently in order to communicate different ideas but the schemes are not the same across all cultures, which implies that social interactions are sometimes cultural expressions.

However, this does not preclude the possibility of cross-cultural interaction since people can understand themselves by learning words and the social and cultural contexts that give meaning to words (Brym & Lie, 2007, p. 141).

Facial expressions, body movements and gestures

Also characteristic of human social interaction is the use of complex mix of non-verbal communication exchanges. It is believed that human face can convey more than 1000 distinct expressions that reflect a whole range of human emotions while arm movements, hand gestures, body postures, and other aspects of our body can send much more messages (Brym & Lie, 2007). Happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, fear, and surprise are the most popular facial expressions that people of different societies recognize and generally agree on what they mean.

As a result, social relations and interaction are regularly regulated by the type of facial expression that people wear at any particular time. For example, most of us are familiar with certain *looks* from our parents, especially those facial expressions that “tell” us to step-away from visitors’ drinks when you were younger.

You can also determine whether people want us to approach them or not and guess whether our lecturer is interested in speaking with us or prepared to listen to complaints just by looking at his/her face. Seduction, smirk, disgust, sarcasm, doubt, disinterest, flirtation, and several other expressions are communicated through our faces and they feature prominently in our day to day interaction with family members and others with whom you are not so familiar with.

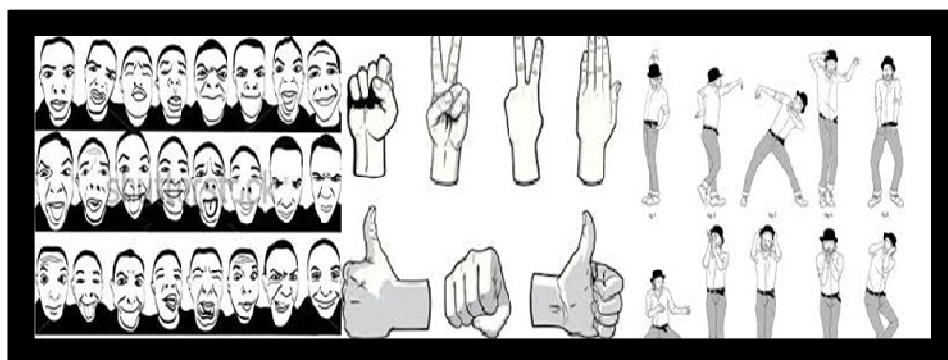
In the same way, body movements and gestures are frequently used in social interaction. How you use your fingers or the entire arms and the direction to which they were pointed can influence people’s reaction towards us.

For example, pointing an index finger towards a location may communicate direction but directing the same finger in somebody’s face may be a sign of threat, warning or

expression or surprise (like when you see an old friend from across the street and without uttering a word, you pointed out to her, indicating something like: “Is that you?”).

Likewise, interlocking one’s pinkie finger with that of your brother can be an agreement to a bet while the middle finger is widely used to communicate abuse. Seen in this light, body movements are not just communicative tools but they are also symbolic.

The greatest expression of the complexity of the role of body movement and gestures in social interaction can be observed in sign language where non-verbal communication has been standardized for use by people who cannot interact with others through speech.



*Figure 3.5 A display of facial expression, gesture and body movement.
Source: Distance Learning Centre (U.I)*

3.2: Theories of Social Interaction

In describing social interaction, sociologists have formulated a number of theories to explain the forms or nature of face-to-face interaction between people. Three of these theories are briefly explained below:

3.2.1: Social Exchange and Rational Choice Theories

The central argument of social exchange theory is that social interaction is characterized by trade in intention and other valued resources. As found in the work of George Homans, social exchange theory states that individuals within the society are constantly involved in relationships of exchanges in which people consider rewards and costs whenever they interact with one another.

In other words, social interaction is nothing more than a simple give and take (Brym & Lie, 2007; Ritzer, 2008). That is, people exchange attention, pleasure, approval, prestige, information and money and the more of these you give, the more you get from others – who are themselves under social pressures to *return the favour* (Brym & Lie, 2007).

Rational choice theory is a variant of exchange theory and it focuses more on how interacting people weigh cost and benefit in social interaction. In rational choice theory,

social actors are seen as purposive and intentioned, having purpose and goals to which their actions are aimed (Ritzer, 2008). In interacting with others, rational choice theorists presumed that people often have predetermined values, preferences or utilities and whatever action they take is motivated these considerations.

Also, the proponents of rational choice believe that not only do people have predetermined goals, but they often choose to forego choices that are not immediately satisfiable. James Coleman was a prominent figure in the rational choice tradition.

3.2.2: Ethno-methodology

This approach to the study of social interaction was pioneered by Harold Garfinkel. The theory concerned itself with everyday life of people and how members of the society make sense of their surroundings (Macionis, 2008).

It argues that people interact with one another based on assumptions about *the* way to behave under certain circumstances. To find out what these assumptions are, Garfinkel encouraged people to break conversational rules of greeting (or conventional response to greetings from others) and observe how people would react. Social interaction, says ethnomethodology, rest on many of these assumption and they are in fact what make social order a possibility.

3.2.3: Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism treats people as active, creative, conscious and self-reflective (Brym & Lie, 2007). In the course of social interaction, interacting individuals are believed to create meanings and desires.

Many sociological theorists are associated with this orientation but it received its greatest theoretical expression in Herbert Blumer while Erving Goffman was noted for important applications of the approach. Symbolic interactionism is based on three main principles:

- ❖ Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning which these things have for them.
- ❖ The meaning of a thing emerges from the process of social interaction.
- ❖ The use of meanings by the actors occurs through a process of interpretation (Blumer, 1969, as cited in Brym & Lie, 2007).

In applying this theory, Goffman developed what is known in sociology as *dramaturgical analysis*. In this application of symbolic interactionism, social interaction was viewed as a sort of play in which people present themselves so that they appear in the best possible light called *impression management*.

The world was considered a big stage in which individuals represent the actors and interact based on scripts. Hence, motherhood/fatherhood is role-playing, just as daughters/sons act out their roles as prescribed in the society.

3.3: Forms of Social Interaction

Social interaction takes different forms because people interact with one another for different reasons. You may interact with our parents because you trust them but engage with other people out of fear or envy.

Also, in most of our daily interaction, you are either associating with other people or simply dissociating ourselves from them. Other people may even try to dominate us or interact with us because they want to cooperate or compete with us.

These indicate that social interaction can take many forms and it is important that you understand the most common modes as students of sociology.



Figure 3.6 Indicates the forms of social interaction.

Soure:<http://www.itnewsafrika.com/2012/10/nigerias-it-leaders-confirm-innovation-dinner-attendance>.

3.3.1: Cooperation

This is one of the most common forms of social interaction that you observe on day to day basis. When people say that “No one is an Island unto him/herself,” they are not only talking about the need to relate with other people but also that you must cooperate with them.

It cannot be denied that nobody has the monopoly of knowledge, information or expertise and definitely no single individual possesses the energy and time to accomplish all the tasks she may want to execute.

Hence, people ceaselessly interact with one another in order to set and achieve personal goals, and they work together to benefit mutually through the effort one another.

While cooperation is often observed among people that have favourable disposition to one another, antagonistic individuals and groups also work together to accomplish goals. Although people may not totally agree with one another, they often reach consensus on the most acceptable courses of action, especially on issues that are valuable to the parties.

This can be observed among kids, siblings, adults, nations, regions and between global continents. For instance, kids can cooperate to build sand mansion but opt for domination when cookies or candy are in the mix.

The same thing can be seen in operation at the Olympics where Western vs. Arabic world dichotomy is de-emphasized in the interest of unity and global peace. Meanwhile, cooperation can be divided into formal and informal types: the former being a form of deliberate and rational cooperation, as in the case of Olympics, while the latter is more or less spontaneous, as in the example of the children above. You can also have what is known as *antagonistic cooperation* in which act cooperatively following conflict or defeat.



Figure 3.7 Describe the forms of cooperation.

Source: <http://ypard.net/2013-july-15/agricultural-cooperation-africa>

3.3.2: Domination

This is considered to be an extreme form of social interaction in which power plays a central role. Here, one party is usually in possession of all the power while the other party has little or no power (Brym & Lie, 2007).

For instance, parents often dominate their children, husbands (men) over wives (women) are common in patriarchal societies like Nigeria, rich above the poor, and prisoners are usually dominated by prison wardens. When you know or believe that someone is more powerful than you are, there is a tendency that our behaviour or action towards them would be shaped by such knowledge or perception.

Similarly, an acting social agent that is aware of her powers over others would most likely relate with them from the position of super-ordinate and effectively place them in subordinating roles. Such power may be in form of money, influence, social class or race, gender, occupation, physical features or abilities and so on.

3.3.3: Competition

Brym and Lie (2007) believe that competition sits in-between the two extremes of cooperation and domination in human social interaction. People often compete with one another because of envy. Here, power also play some role but the level of inequality of power distribution is low when contrasted with what obtained in dominating social interaction.

In competitive interaction, people aim to take possession of scarce or limited material and non-material goods and resources. Pepper Sellers at Bodija market try to out-do each other by being friendly to customers, students present manifestos and make promises during political campaigns in order to gain the support of other students, children endeavour to perform better on school tests to win the love and affection of their parents or to earn the respect of classmates while ideas, such as capitalism and communism, compete to gain acceptance across the world. Although competitive interaction can be a source of progress and a basis for building compromise, it can also result in social conflict and animosity.



Figure 3.8 Competitive interaction among the people.

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/11/nigerias-25bn-telecom-market-haven-businessmen-toure/>

- Thinking about this present 200 level sociology classroom, mention all the statuses that you think are possible at this moment.
- You can have teacher, student, friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, male, female, sister, brother etc.

3.4: Social Change

Through social interaction, social processes or patterned way of behaviour usually evolve in societies. However, social interaction is never static. This is so because human beings are diverse in many respects and are, almost by nature, “condemned” to continuous creation and re-creation of attitudes, behaviours, values and social artifacts.

Hence, individuals, whether acting as themselves or as members of small or large social study sessions, engage in ceaseless flow of interaction that brings about changes in the society.

Change is a constant and common occurrence in every society. What you call change in societies is usually the observed difference between a particular period B and another particular period A.

In sociology, social change generally refers to changes in the social structure and social relationships in the society over a period of time (Virtual University, 2006). According to

Aderinto (Aderinto, 2001, p. 162), “*social change* can be defined as a succession of events produced over time resulting to either a modification or replacement of particular patterns or units.

It includes all changes from simple procedural reforms to radical ones.” This change can occur at the individual, institutional or societal levels and may be studied through the analysis of the differences in patterns of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, norms, and structural arrangement within a society at a present time and compared with what obtained at an earlier time. For instance, wearing of trousers was considered “un-womanlike” among Yoruba people some decades ago but not anymore.

The structure of the family in African countries has also changed from largely polygamous to monogamous type due to the influence of western values and the adoption of religious doctrines of Christianity. Also, traditional structures of crime control and conflict resolution have been replaced by modern judiciary and her civil, criminal and arbitration courts.

Except in special situations, such as in sudden, radical, revolutionary or catastrophic occurrences, social change is usually gradual, involving a slow process of initiation, modification and transformation.

It can also be *continuous* or *discontinuous* (Calhoun, 2000). When social change is continuous, it occurs in small increments and reveals long-term patterns of changes in the same social system or unit. When change is discontinuous, previous states cease to exist as in when a corporation is created, merged, or terminated. Furthermore, changes also occur in societies as a result of *endogenous* or *exogenous* factors (Aderinto, 2001).

While endogenous changes are brought about by factors inherent in the system (e.g. social problems or conflicts within a group or society at large), factors that are external to the system (such as cultural interaction) bring about exogenous changes.

Social change has the following as its main characteristics:

- Social change happens all the time and it is inevitable.
- It may be planned and intentional but may also occur suddenly and without planning. Instances of planned changes are enormous, from changes in governmental policy on education, road use, agricultural production, to national policies integration and suchlike. Unplanned changes may include transformation in settlement and land use patterns following urban growth and the introduction of modern infrastructures in certain locations.
- Change is controversial, often bringing about both good and bad consequences. Consider the advancement in mobile technologies with mobile cameras, 3G/3.5G, real-time internet uploads, Bluetooth and other sharing platforms and devices. While these changes can lead to improvements in information sharing, personal

freedom and crime prevention and detection, they also incapacitate established societal control mechanisms and lead to moral disorientation.

- Some changes matter more than others; compare fashion and information technology for instance

3.5: Theories of Social Change

3.5.1: Evolutionism

This theory proposed that societal changes are a continuous process in which something in its current state retains the essential characteristics of its original form (Otitte & Ogionwo, as cited in Aderinto, 2001).

This theory derived primarily from Charles Darwin's ideas of evolution of species in which humans were claimed to have evolved from a previous state of imperfection and striving towards a more perfect state of the survival of the fittest.

Like human beings, the evolutionist theory of social change maintains that societies and the social institutions, groups and units within them are emerging from an earlier state, undergoing a continuous process of change or progress towards perfectability (Aderinto, 2001). The theory had been used by sociologists to explain changes in knowledge, attitude and behavioural patterns in different societies.

3.5.2: Diffusionism

Rather than focus on how changes occur through societal evolution, diffusionism conceived social change to be a consequence of cross-cultural interaction. When cultural elements spread through social boundaries, alien cultures flow into new territories, mix with existing cultures and modify or transform indigenous cultural patterns.

Such flows can occur through borrowing or adoption, suggestion, migration or domination. For instance, the use of Pidgin (or broken) English in Nigeria, and the symbolic attachment of "formal dressing" to the Western shirt, tie and trouser among Nigerians, can be traced to the spread of English culture since the 18th century.

3.5.3: Structural-functionalism

While evolutionism talked about change in terms of societies heading towards perfection, diffusionism emphasized the influence of cultural contacts between culturally distinct societies. On its part, structural-functionalism considered social change to be a result of changes in the structures of the society. For instance, when the traditional system of economic exchange changed to printed notes from trade by barter, the value attached to particular *kind* of paper became transformed, and accordingly changing economic relations as well.

Also, as the structure of traditional family system changed in most African countries so was the value placed on kin and kindred and kinship ties in our lives. To structural-functionalism, therefore, it is the change that occurs in social structures and sub-units of the society that brings about changes in the society.

3.5.4: Conflict Perspective

This view of social change was made popular by Karl Marx who claimed that the basis of societal transformation was conflict. According to this perspective, every society is at any particular point in time constituted by social structures and institutions that promote inequality. Every human society is believed to be locked in dialectical economic struggle that ends only with the eradication of inequality and social oppression.

Therefore change is therefore produced when the oppressed elements revolt to correct such inequality. For this perspective, change was not a passive process but an active, conscious process of deconstruction and re-composition. For instance, the change in the position of women and other marginalized groups in the society, and the eventual introduction of affirmative action in many countries, were in the view of conflict theorists due to emergence of conscious awareness among oppressed groups and their decision to do something about it.

- Think about Nigeria since the beginning of the 21st century and state some of the factors that you think had made the greatest change in the Nigerian society.
- One is information and communication technology, especially in the area of GSM and internet access and usage. Transition to democratic is another important factor that brought change in the country.

3.6: Factors Influencing Change in Societies

You noted earlier that societies can experience changes and transformation in their structures through factors that are internal or external to them. These factors are varied and can lead to different kind of changes in different societies.

In contemporary times, the degree of interaction or interconnection between the structures of distinct societies, as brought about by the globalization phenomenon, can also cause unimaginable social changes. Below are a few of the factors that can influence change in the society:

3.6.1: Cultural Factors

Through cultural invention, discovery of new ones, or diffusion of new with indigenous cultures, societies can experience small to large-scale changes in their structures and pattern of relationships.

For example, the spread of hip-hop culture from the United States has been influencing the image of youths in many countries in Africa, Europe and Asia. Again, the view of *an educated* person has changed considerably in most societies since the formal, Western-type mode of education became accepted in many countries.

To be “educated” today means that such a person must have received instructions in formally organized school system. This view departs greatly from what was believed long ago. As an example, Isocrates, the Greek philosopher in the golden years of Athens,

defined *the* educated as someone that is self-aware and who can rationally handle day-to-day interaction with his fellow men and women.

3.6.2: Social Conflict

Social conflict has been the source of change in many societies. Such conflict may or may not be characterized by uprising, violence or war. Sometimes, it may be mere struggle expressed through protests, strong advocacy and confrontational debates. Whichever form it takes, social conflict can either modify existing pattern of relationship or lead to radical transformation of social, political and economic system of the society.

For instance, the on-going uprising in the Middle Eastern region of the world and North Africa have led to radical changes in the political system, and perhaps in the perception of political elites about the capabilities of the youths of those countries.

The Second Great War of 1939-1945 also contributed to the creation of global organizations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, all of which have impacted socio-economic policies in many places. Similarly, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970 led to state creation while some minority groups that were hitherto marginalized became more powerful.



Figure 3.9 Social conflict in Africa.

Source :<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/16/nigeria-restores-fuel-subsidy-protests>.

3.6.3: Population

A rise or reduction in population can alter the structure of the society for good or for worse. For instance, not only would population increase lead to social problems that may prompt policy changes on the expected number of birth per family (as it was China to control population growth), it can also change the population structure of national, rural

and urban demographic characteristic from equally distributed to ageing, youthful, or dependent population.

In Nigeria, rural-urban migration has been contributing to population growth in urban centres since the 1970s, putting pressure on available resources and infrastructures while also changing the pattern of behaviour in rural areas due to spread of imported values from return-migrants among local resident.

In the highly populated city of Lagos, the heavy flow of rural migrants into urban spaces had also prompted city officials to introduce policies which banned trading activities on roadsides to accommodate the swelling traffic of people, goods, and automobiles.

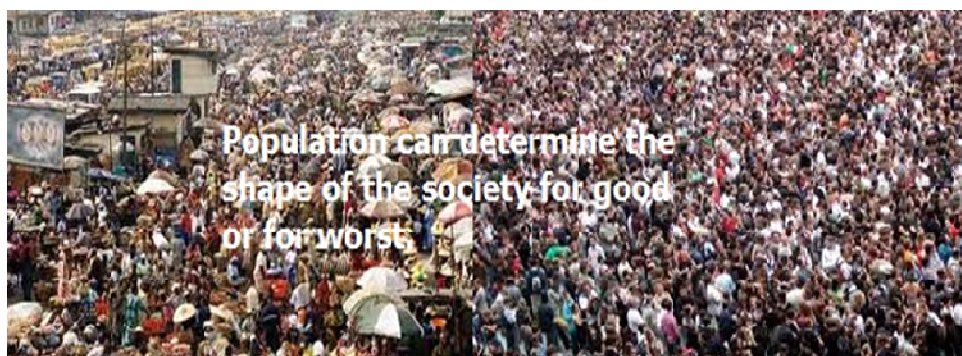


Figure 4.0 Explains how population serves as the determinant of structure of the society.
Source:<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/16/nigeria-restores-fuel-subsidy-protests>

3.6.4: Ideas

It is often said that ideas rule the world but another truth to the prominence of idea lies in its capability to change human societies. In no other discipline is this fact typified than natural science which, since the early period of systematic inquiry in Greece, has progressively shaped attitudes, relationships and perception and belief about the world. For example, venturing into the space was not conceivable as at the time when the world was believed to be flat and stretched-out. Then, there were no space stations, no race to the Moon or Mars, Aeronautic Engineers were not being trained at universities and physics was not given as much prominence as it later came to be.

Also during the Cold War period, international relations was organized on, and alliances were formed the basis of, Capitalism vs. Socialism/Communism polarization. This was a period when social and economic ideas were turned into ideologies and guide for social interaction.

In addition, Nazism changed the attitude of Germans towards Jews in the late 1930s and led to the death of children and women in their millions. Same thing can be said of social interaction in Apartheid South Africa and Rwanda Hutu-Tutsi relations in the 1990s.

Feminism and Critical Race Theory are also important ideas that have changed attitudes and social structures of societies in recent times.

■ In Nigeria social conflict is a blessing to the societies?

□ It is a blessing when it brings social change.

3.6.5: Technology and Information Technologies

The structures of many societies have also been changed due to changes in technology and development in information and communications technologies. For example, the industrial revolution in Europe led to the transformation of production system on that continent. Through centuries of advancement in ship-building, Europeans were also able to transfer the new technology into other continents.

In African countries, this technology led to the abandonment of traditional farming methods and changed the food production pattern of many local communities. As this was going on, information sharing and communication techniques were being developed and this is why you now talk of internet, telephones, fax, satellite TV, etc. With these, social interaction moved beyond face-to-face exchanges into another world known as *virtual reality* where businesspeople conduct business activities and students receive lectures just as you have in the real world. It is also due to changes in information and communication that global “this” and “that” are now popular in contemporary societies.



Figure 4.1 Indicates advancement in technology and information technology of farming method

Source: <http://www.digitalsensenews.com.ng/DSBNews/243167/2012/05/employ-modern-techniques-to-boost-farm-productivity-experts>

3.6.6: Environmental Changes

Amongst other things, environmental degradation, erosion, ozone depletion and alterations in the climatic conditions can lead to serious changes in societal structures. People can abandon their homes because their physical environment could no longer support them.

An instance of this can be seen in Nigeria’s Niger-Delta region where oil exploration led to both loss of livelihood and disappearance of small communities. Recently, changes in climate conditions led to rise in the level of water bodies in some coastal areas in Lagos State, resulting in the disappearance of human habitats and businesses around the beach sections.



*Figure 4.2 A view of environmental changes.
Source <http://www.unpo.org/article/14952>*

3.6.7: Social Movements

In recent decades, social movements have been great forces of change in developed and developing countries. Non-governmental organizations, associations, professional groups, and numerous not-for profit institutions have contributed to changes at community, national, regional, continental and global levels.

In Nigeria, child and women rights groups were instrumental to the formulation of social policies that transformed the treatment of children and females in law. As actors working together to accomplish specific goals, the activities of social movements also played important roles in redefining the purpose or goals of corporate organizations, widening their focus from the narrow idea of profit-making to community development and social responsibility.

Summary for Study Session 4

In this Study session, the focus had been on social process and change. In the course of our discussion, you observed that:

- ❖ Social process referred to the established patterns or forms of behaving in the society.
- ❖ This process is created by social interaction between people and regulated by status, roles and norms, and facilitated through communication, including verbal, constituted by written symbols or speech, and non-verbal methods like facial expressions, body movements and gestures.
- ❖ Exchange theorists believe that social interaction is sometimes informed by exchanges and rational choice proponents hold that people have preferences when they engage in social exchanges and that they interact with one another after a due consideration of the cost and reward at stake.
- ❖ Social interaction, according to symbolic interactionists, is also symbolic and human beings were thought to relate on the basis of unstated assumptions which you may not be conscious about until they are broken.

- ❖ Meanwhile, ethno methodologists see social interaction as role-playing in which every social actors act and engaged in impression management.
- ❖ Cooperation, domination and competition were the three most common forms of relationship that characterize human social interaction.
- ❖ Also through interaction, social changes do occur and no society is immune to change in attitudes, values, belief, and social structures.
- ❖ Theoretical positions on social change ranged from those who believe that all human societies are evolving towards a state of perfection to others that claimed that societal changes were due to the spread of cultural elements from one society to the next. Yet, some others think that changes in structures and sub-systems were the cause of social change and may sometimes be caused by conflicts and struggle between social elements.
- ❖ Several factors may however influence change. These include culture, social conflict, population, environmental changes, ideas, technology and social movements.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study session 3

Now that you have completed this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering the questions below. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this study.

SAQ 3.1 (tests learning outcome 3.1)

Define social interaction and describe relevance or role, status and norms in day to day activities of individuals in the society.

SAQ 3.2 (tests learning outcome 3.2)

Mention and briefly describe at least two (2) theories of social interactions that you are familiar with.

SAQ 3.3 (tests learning outcome 3.3)

What are the common forms of social interaction?

SAQ 3.4 (tests learning outcome 3.4)

What is your understanding of social change?

SAQ 3.5 (tests learning outcome 3.4)

List and explain five (5) factors that can influence change in a society.

Study Session 4 Contemporary Social Problems

Expected duration: 1 week or 2 contact hours

Introduction

As you can see we have explained somewhere in this course that social interactions, and the processes that bring them about, were fundamental aspects of every human society. In addition to making it possible for people to relate with, compete against, and benefit from one another, social interactions also create changes and conditions that cause social disorder or what is popularly known as social problems in sociology.

Social problems are important themes in sociology and you will, as a matter of fact, be right to say that the discipline owe its emergence and continued relevance in contemporary time to the study of social problems.

In the current Study session, we shall explain what it means for an issue or social reality to be considered a social problem. We will describe some of the most distinguished attributes that give a problem a “social” status, as different from natural, personal or private problems. Also to be covered in this Study session are the processes or stages in the life cycle of social problems, their causes and brief explanations on some social problems in contemporary Nigerian society.

Learning Outcomes for Study session 4

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 4.1 Define what social problems are and mention examples of issues that are considered to be social problems in contemporary societies (SAQ 4.1);
- 4.2 Describe the nature and characteristics of social problems (SAQ 4.2);
- 4.3 List and explain the stages in the life cycle of social problems (SAQ 4.3)
- 4.4 State some of the factors that cause social problems in most societies (4.4)
- 4.5 Explain why unemployment, poverty, corruption and religious crises are believed to be social problems in contemporary Nigerian society (SAQ 4.4).

4.1: Definitions and Nature of Social Problems

Although social problems are hard to define in a single, generally acceptable manner, they are peculiarly unique problems that, if uncontrolled or eradicated, can destroy valued societal norms, cause serious breakdown of law and order, lead to revolution or bring about the demise of nations. As such, one of the ways that social problems have been defined was that they are problems that emerge from social interactions, caused by strains in social systems and which threaten the realisation of societal norms or values (Adenugba, 2009).

Social problems may also be described as problems which a large segment of the society perceive as creating undesirable difference between socially prescribed norms or ideals and social realities. In other words, a problem must be perceptibly by a significant number of the people as threatening to social structures and the fundamental principles and norms of relationships before it is considered “social.”

Let’s consider how prostitution within the Nigerian context can clarify the content of the definitions of social problems above. When sex is changed for money in Nigeria – an act that the prostituting parties see as a form of economic transaction – the norms that prohibit non-conjugal and indiscriminate sexual relations are threatened. Not only will this pattern of sexual relation lead to the collapse of valued norms, commercialised sex also lead to the spread of non-curable diseases, causing deaths and economic losses.

Similarly, the act of self-murder or suicide, a social action that has been erroneously interpreted as a deeply personal or private matter, becomes a social problem was shown or believed to have been caused by some lack of integration in the social system.

You can now see that social problems are unlike other problems that occur in human societies. Social problems emerge from, and affect, social relations and the extent to which they disturb public order is what give them that status.

Social problems also have **time** and **location** dynamics. With regards to time, different historical period usually have their own set of social problems and some of the issues that were not perceived as problems at a certain time in the past are now considered serious social problems.

In Nigeria for instance, kidnapping and cultism were not serious social problems in the 1960s. By the 1990s, however, cultism in Nigeria’s tertiary institutions was rampant while kidnappings did not gain prominence until the 2000s. Today, these two are some of the most popular social problems facing members of the Nigerian society.

Relatedly, social problems have location dynamics lived experiences of members of society A differ from what members of society B experience. For example, while racism is not a social problem in Nigeria, the same cannot be said of South Africa where the bits and pieces of past social relations continues to affect ethnic relations more than eighteen years the formal end of apartheid rule. In other words, what constitute social problems differs from society to society.

Having said this, we must be careful not to confuse social problems with **natural problems**. One obvious difference between natural and social problems is that the cause of the former is usually beyond the control of human beings while the latter are almost always man-made. For instance, while earthquakes, flooding, tsunamis, famine and other natural disasters were caused by some imbalances in the physical environment, corruption, prostitution, poverty, unemployment, cultism, child-trafficking, student unrest, armed robbery and so on are social problems because their causes lay in social interaction and they are mostly solvable through human effort.

Based on all that have been said so far, we should be able to highlight the most important conditions that a problem must meet before we call it a social problem. These conditions include that:

1. **The problem must be perceived to be a social problem by the public.** In studying the phenomenon of baby-dumping in Nigeria, one of the questions that may be asked is whether the respondents think it was a problem. If the public did not feel that a particular social reality was a problem, we cannot take it as one.
2. **Such problem must create an undesirable gap between social ideals and reality.** We know that societies value human life and norms that protect its sanctity are usually instituted to ensure that life is treated with respect. So when groups randomly take lives (as in the case of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria) or when people are publicly executed without trial (as in the now popular case of ALU4 in Rivers State), many are most likely to feel that these killings create unfavourable gap between social ideal and societal reality.
3. **It must be solvable through collective action.** Since social problems are man-made, collaborative actions among people must be able to solve them. For instance, the Federal Government would not have established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) if it believed that corruption was a natural occurrence.
4. **The problem should have some effect on a large percentage of the population.** Many social problems around us have direct and indirect effects on us. Even a seemingly “minority” problem like kidnapping in the Niger-Delta region is in fact a problem for the entire Nigerian society since it impacts national revenue and cause serious damage to the image of the country at the international level. So when a problem is tagged a social problem, you must ask yourself whether that problem affects a large percentage of the population.

Before going on to the next section, it must be mentioned that beside the conditions, there are a number of groups involved in determining if, when and how an issue becomes a social problem. Depending on the nature of the problem, the time when the problem surfaced and those it affected, groups such as the media, government agents and agencies, social advocates, religious leaders, custodians of culture, elites and other influential/powerful actors can be determiners of what issue may (may not) be elevated to the status of a social problem.

In fact, issues that many people do not take seriously or considered consequential may suddenly once powerful groups like the national legislators formulate policy for or against it. An example of this is the issue of same-sex marriage that assumed the status of social problem once a member of the National Assembly of Nigeria proposed a strong law against gay marriage.

4.2: Causes of Social Problems in the Society

The occurrence of social problems within any society is mostly due to multiple causes. According to Adenugba (2009), these causes include, but not limited, to the following:

- ❖ **Chaos.** Chaotic situation is in itself a form of disorder and therefore not only a cause of social problem but also the effect of it. Chaotic situations can come in many forms, from lack of proper guidance due to the absence of father figure in the household to cultural conflicts that bring about a breakdown of rules and regulations.
- ❖ **Deviance and misbehaviour.** Deviance occurs when some members of the society fail to live in accordance with existing norms of behaviour. Deviant act or misbehaviour has a tendency to cause tensions in social interactions and interpersonal relationships, both of which may lead to disorder in the social structure. For example, armed robbery is considered a misbehaviour in most societies since the act deviates from valued social norms that prohibit unlawful and forced dispossession.

That is to say that people are normally expected to give up their personal properties out of free will; but it is a freewill that is usually taken away forcefully whenever armed robbery takes place. This effectively makes armed robbery a social problem since the “normal” way of behaving has been deviated from.

- ❖ **Socio-cultural, political and demographic changes.** Sudden changes within the society can also contribute to the emergence of social problems. These changes can be political (such as when new laws are passed), socio-cultural (as in when there is intensification of western mode of living in African societies), or even demographic (such as when a society experiences a rapid increase in the movement of people from rural areas into urban centres).

For instance, there is a sense in which we can claim for certain that the exposure of Nigerian youths to material culture, as popularised in western media, played a great role in the spread of “Yahoo! Yahoo!!” In the same vein, a surge in the number of people living in the cities at any particular point in time can lead to widespread poverty and unemployment.

Likewise, policy change in traffic law that prohibits *Okada* (or commercial motorbike) riding in a highly populated city may not only render people jobless but also create a pool of law breakers or those who may choose to survive and meet ends through socially proscribed means.

- ❖ **Social conflicts.** Again, inter-class/group conflicts can also cause social problems in the society. When there exists in any human setting some conditions of inequality between upper/majority and lower/minority groups, the likelihood of

serious problems coming about can be high. Take terrorism and militancy as quick examples: when groups take up arms against the government, social inequality and injustices were often cited as their primary motivation for doing so. Also in the first half of the 20th century, unequal race relation was said to be the main factor that intensified the prevalence of poverty among the blacks and other minority groups in the United States.

4.3: Stages in the Life Cycle Social Problems

Social problems go through is known as **cycle**, that is, the series of processes that takes place from the point of discovery of a problem to when it is eventually eradicated. According to Herbert Blumer (1997, cited in Adenugba, 2009), there are five (5) evolutionary process or stages in the life cycle of social problems:

1. **Discovery stage.** This is the first in the series of stages that a social problem goes through. The problem gets discovered at this point, the point when the people notice the existence of the problem for the first time.
2. **Confirmation stage.** At this stage, the reality and the extent of the problem would be ascertained. The society confirms that the problem is actually a social problem and not a mere personal problem or natural problem that may not be due to human creation.
3. **Prevention stage.** Here, steps are taken to halt the spread of the problem. The society usually embarks on advocacy to bring the problem to the awareness of other members of the public in a bid to prevent its spread.
4. **Eradication stage.** The society draws up plans to eradicate the problem. Such plans would incorporate strategies to be adopted and the highlight and secure the needed resources to effectively deal with the social problem.
5. **Implementation stage.** This is the fifth and last stage in Blumer's framework on the life cycle of social problems. The strategies that had been mapped out in the earlier phase will be set in motion at this point. The goal is mainly to solve the problem through collective action.

4.4: Some Social Problems in Contemporary Nigeria

There is no society without her own set of social problems and this fact applies to Nigeria as well. In recent times, some of the issues that assumed the status of social problems in Nigeria included terrorism, armed robbery, bribery and corruption, poverty, extra-judicial killings, kidnapping, fraud, religious crises and unemployment, to mention but a few.

Nigerian newspapers, television, radio stations and dedicated web and social media sites are filled with reports of crimes and mass impoverishment on daily basis, a reality that is indicative of the fact that social problems are widespread in contemporary Nigerian society. Considering amount and scale of the social problems in the country, we shall take a brief look at only four (4) in this study session.

4.3.1: Unemployment

In general terms, unemployment refers to the situation of lack of job or income generating activity to support oneself and/or one's family, usually over a sustained period of time. This is one problem that affects different segments of the population in a differently and it is one of the greatest challenge confronting the government of Nigeria in the 21st century.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012), unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 23.90% in 2011, a marked increase from the figures of 2009 (19.7%) and 2010 (21.1%). A recent survey showed that an average of 1.8 million new entrants came joined the labour force annually from 2007 to 2011 (NBS, 2012).

This striking figure accounted for only those that entered the national workforce after graduation from universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and did not include secondary school drop-outs. Given this size of new entrants into the labour force and the small number of available jobs, it is therefore not surprising that unemployment is considered a social problem in Nigeria.

Many factors combined to create this situation but the most significant of them are poor economic growth, low investment in high employment generating enterprises, poor entrepreneurial education for youths and poor access of existing entrepreneurs to credit facility.

Another cause of unemployment is the growing disinterest of youths in highly-labour intensive work such as farming and factory work, a situation that has, over the years, been worsened by declining investment in the two sectors by both private and public enterprises. Meanwhile, the continued failure of national, state and private training institutions to equip students with new and relevant skills has remained a factor in the challenge being faced by Nigeria in the area of unemployment. As a social problem in contemporary Nigeria, unemployment has been the source of multiple imbalances in the country and its consequences for social order continues to worry many.

National Unemployment Rate, 2011

National	23.90%
Rural	24.60%
Urban	16.10%
Male	23.50%
Female	23.30%

National Bureau of Statistics, 2012

Amongst other things, unemployment elongates the duration of poverty in poor households. This is often the case in homes that committed the entire family resources into the education of children with the hope of higher returns in the near future. Not only will lack of job opportunities cause suffering within the household, it puts pressure on the children to succeed at all cost. It is therefore not surprising to find graduates becoming armed robbers executive beggars and prostitutes.



Figure 4.1 High level of job seekers in Africa.
Source: <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/views/article>

Furthermore, unemployment can spur violence protests, militancy and destabilise the social system. In fact, this view has played out in the Niger-Delta for more than a decade, with kidnappings and murders becoming a tool in the hands of dissatisfied youths. With the projected rise of the workforce by 2050, we can be sure that unemployment will cause serious damage to the Nigerian society unless something drastic is done.

4.3.2: Poverty

Poverty has many dimensions and it can mean different things to different people. Nevertheless, the reality of poverty is felt by every poor person as lack of basic necessities of life, especially food, shelter, and income; scholars have also included lack of education, vulnerability and lack of opportunities as aspects of poverty. Over the last couple of decades, the widely used measurements of poverty are the \$1 per day and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) measures.

Poverty is social problem in Nigeria for many reasons. First, close to 70% of the country's over 163 million people are living in poverty in 2012, a condition that had worsened 1980s when poverty incidence was estimated at 26.2%. Given this scenario, it is hard to imagine how social, economic and political development may be achieved in due time.



Figure 4.2: Shows the rate of Poverty in Nigeria.

Source <http://www.nairaland.com/164502/nigerians-really-live-less-than/1>

Second, there are strong evidences to support the fact that poverty is the source other problems confronting the Nigerian population, including poor health, malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality, high illiteracy level, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, poor political participation, rise of slums in urban centres, environmental damages, child labour, food crises, and increase in marginal occupations such as begging, street hawking, child-trafficking and so on.

Third, and finally, poverty in Nigeria is unequally distributed, with more people impoverished people in the North than in the South of the country while more rural residents live in poverty than those in urban centres. This made poverty in Nigeria a highly politicised issue. Today many scholars are beginning to suggesting that the continued existence a unified Nigeria will, perhaps, be determined by what is achieved in poverty reduction in the coming years. You can therefore see that poverty is serious social problem that must be tackled in time if destructive social disorder is to be prevented.

4.3.3: Corruption

Corruption has many faces, sometimes manifesting as bribery, cronyism, financial and election fraud, forgery, money-laundering, embezzlement, nepotism etc. Nigerian often pay before files are signed at public secretariats and they grease elbows to have contract papers forward to the right offices while government officials sit on promising projects and award contracts to unqualified friends and associates.

In recent times, large scale pension fraud and subsidy scam were exposed respectively at Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation and in the oil industry. Before these, countless national leaders were either accused or investigated or jailed for corruption-related offences.

According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), an annual internationally renowned publication of the Transparency International which ranks countries on a scale of 0 (very

corrupt) to 10 (very clean) using different corruption parameters, Nigeria ranked 143 out of 182 countries in 2011. By this standard, Nigeria is one of the few most corrupt nations in the world. In fact, the country is yet to score above 2.7 since the CPI was instituted in 1995! This is probably the reason why some scholars think that a culture of corruption exists in Nigeria.

Corruption is a product of many factors and cannot be explained by considering a single factor. Some of these factors are personal greed and avarice, strong aversion for hard work, breakdown of norms and the legal system, gift-giving culture that blurs the line between genuine appreciation and “unholy incentive,” poverty, poor condition of service etc.



Figure 4.3 Explains corruption in the society.

Source: Distance Learning Centre (U.I)

As another problem with a status of social problem in Nigeria, corruption promotes inefficiency in public and private sectors and leads to waste of national resources. When a police officer collects bribe and extorts helpless citizens who cannot defend themselves, the Police, as an important institution of social control, loses credibility, and this may further lead to public distrust and generalised apathy. Corruption also destroys lives since it aids the diversion of monies needed to provide social services into private pockets.

4.3.4: Religious Crises

We have noted somewhere in this course guide that Nigeria is diverse in many respects, particularly in her environmental, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious make-up. While diversity is ordinarily expected to be a source of strength, unity and progress, the existence of different religions in Nigeria has caused intolerance, violent conflicts, maiming, and destruction of properties and deaths of millions since independence. Interestingly, a poll by Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life revealed that 92% of Nigerians, mainly Muslims and Christians, pray to God on a daily basis!

Over the last few decades, several small to large scale conflicts were recorded in states like Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Lagos, Bauchi, Bornu, and Sokoto while Adamawa and Yola featured as additional hotspots for religious fundamentalism in recent past.

In all of these places, adherents of Islam and Christianity fought over issues that sometimes have ethno-linguistic undertone. Because both religions prohibit unlawful killings and encourage tolerance and peaceful co-existence, it has been argued that the crises being experienced in the religious sphere was due in part to issues of land rights, social justice, poverty, unemployment and so on.



Figure 4.4 Burning of worship centres in northern Nigeria.
Source: <http://www.hrw.org/node/78902>

Like all other types of social crises, religious crisis can cause irreconcilable divide between the peoples of a society. The constant tension that pervade in religiously intolerant society may create a situation in which all issues of national concern are permanently compartmentalised between religiously lines and cause difficulty in reaching consensus on matters that have direct impact on unity and national survival. It is therefore important that this problem is resolved in time to avert total disintegration.

■ Given the character of the four (4) problems that we have called “social” in contemporary Nigeria, identify at least two (2) others, describe the problems and suggest ways of dealing with them.

□ Other problems that can be identified are prostitution, child labour, women disempowerment etc.

4.5: Tackling Social Problems in Nigeria

At all levels of government, efforts have been devoted to tackling social problems in Nigeria. With particular reference to the problems that we have examined so far, myriad of policies and programmes were implemented at different times to deal with unemployment, poverty, corruption and religious crises.

In the area of unemployment, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established by the federal government gather data on unemployment for use in employment planning and provided training opportunities for unskilled youths while at the same time supporting promising entrepreneurs with credit to grow small businesses. State-level programmes have also surfaced in many regions across the country. Examples

of this in the South-West include the Youth Empowerment Schemes in Osun and Oyo states, literacy and vocational training centres in Lagos etc.

Because poverty has many dimensions, it has been confronted with multiple strategies, starting with the National Development Programmes (NDP), the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), Integrated Rural Development Programmes, Green Revolution, Better Life for Rural Women, National Poverty Eradication Programme, National/State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (N/SEED), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Vision 20/20.

Corruption on its part also received, and continues to receive, serious attention. Besides the anti-corruption policies of military and civilian administrations in the past decades, the creation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Independent Corrupt-Practices Commission and Other Offences were the most comprehensive attempts to tackle corruption in recent history.

These organisations have charged prosecuted and secured convictions of frauds and malpractices against politicians and bigwigs in Nigeria, some of which led to the recovery of stolen funds in international financial institutions.

In the same vein, religious organisations have been at the forefront of the struggle for the promotion of more tolerant society. In fact, the increasing threat posed to the security of lives and properties by Boko Haram in the Northern part of the country seems to have heightened the involvement of Muslim clerics in the peace process as they continue to distance themselves from the vision of the group.

On the Christian side, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has been most vocal in speaking for peace and tolerance while government set up investigative committees to ascertain the causes of violence and propose recommendations for the eradication of future occurrences.

Unfortunately, these efforts are yet to produce the desired results. A ridiculously high percentage of the country's labour force is still out of job, most of them youths and fresh graduates. Waste, mismanagement, misgovernment, inefficiency, poor economic growth and lack of social amenities and infrastructural underdevelopment have rendered poverty reduction strategies ineffective.

At the same time, lack of political will, and of sustained and tireless dialogue, continues to hamper serious progress in the war against corruption and religious intolerance. As students of sociology, part of our assignment is to begin to imagine how these problems can be confronted in a bid to evolve a peaceful and progressive society.

- From the course of this study identify some of the causes of social problem in Nigeria?
- Bad leadership, high rate of unemployment, economy recession, high rate of poverty.

Summary for Study Session 4

So far, we have endeavoured to explain different aspects of what is known as social problems in sociology. We have learnt that:

- Social problems are a unique set of problems that can destroy valued societal norms, cause serious breakdown of law and order, lead to revolution or bring about the demise of nations.
- As such, social problems are problems that emerge from social interactions, caused by strains in social systems and which threaten the realisation of societal norms.
- Social problems are not personal or natural problems and for any problem to assume the status of “social,” it must have been thought to be so by a significantly large percentage of the population and must be believed to have created an undesirable difference between social ideal and social reality.
- What we call social problems can be caused by chaotic situations, deviance and misbehaviour, socio-cultural, political and demographic changes as well as social conflicts.
- Social problems go through five (5) stages or phases: Discovery, Confirmation, Prevention, Eradication and Implementation stages.
- All societies face problems and Nigeria is not an exemption, with unemployment, poverty, corruption and religious crises being few of the most important at this time of the country's existence.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering the following questions. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this study session.

SAQ 4.1 (tests learning outcome 4.1)

What is your understanding of social problems as a sociological concept? Highlight some of its important characteristics.

SAQ 4.2 (tests learning outcome 4.4)

Mention and explain what you consider to be the causes of social problems.

SAQ 4.3 (tests learning outcome 4.3)

Explain the five (5) stages in the life cycle of social problems.

SAQ 4.4 (tests learning outcome 4.5)

What social problem would you rank number one (1) in Nigeria today? Why?

Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study session 1

SAQ 1.1: Sociological perspective is a way of looking at things in sociology and it shapes the type of questions you ask and the answers you provide.

SAQ 1.2: By engaging imbibing the scientific attitude and connecting seemingly unrelated events in the social world.

SAQ 1.3: All structures and institutions in the society perform specific and interdependent functions that help to keep the society together.

SAQ 1.4: The greatest strength of the conflict perspective is that it recognised the fact that social relations are shaped by conflicts that often arise from differing interests in the society.

Notes Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ) for Study session 2

SAQ 2.1: Nigeria's climate is tropical, marked with distinct hot and dry seasons. The vegetation of the country also differs as you move from the south to the north, and each of the vegetation can be recognized by the amount of tree concentration in an area.

SAQ 2.2: Nigeria's population is high and increasing, young, and marked by rural-urban flows

SAQ 2.3: Ethnicity gives identity to people, promotes group cohesion etc.

SAQ 2.4: Many religions are practiced in Nigeria but Islam, Christianity and traditional religions are most popular. Meanwhile, there is also some degree of internal dynamism in each of them.

Notes on Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study session 3

SAQ 3.1: Social interactions refers to the pattern of relationship between people in the society and the order that you observe in our everyday is due to the facts of generally shared belief about statuses, our acceptance of roles that you were socialized into and how you live in accordance with societal norms.

SAQ 3.2: Social interaction may be competitive, cooperative and dominating.

SAQ 3.3: Social exchange/rational choice theory, which maintained that people calculate cost and benefit in social relations, and ethnomethodology, which argued that people act out socially pre-defined roles when they interact.

SAQ 3.4: Social change refers to changes in the social structure and social relationships in the society over a period of time.

SAQ 3.5: Social change can occur as result of social, political, technological, environmental, population and cultural changes.

Notes on Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

SAQ 4.1: It affects a large percentage of the population and the public perceive it to be a problem.

SAQ 4.2: It is caused by many factors, among which are changes in the social and political structure of the society.

SAQ 4.3: The life cycle of a social problem starts with discovery and ends with the implementation of eradication plans.

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