Introduction

From where did you acquire your mother tongue?

How did you learn to eat?

How did you learn to worship?

All these are not inherited by birth, but learned and acquired from one's family, peer groups, schools or from other social groups. We learn many things from our family, even before we step into the school or mix into the society. Though we all learn these things from our respective families, differences might exist amongst us in our ways of worshipping, the types of food we prefer, dress pattern, settlement pattern and so on.

Why do these differences exist amongst us?

We learn these differential ways of life from our family, community and society. Anthropologists study family, community, society and religion as social institutions. They also study the role of these institutions
play in the process of learning certain ways of life that are different from another. As human beings, we all live in a society, each characterised by a distinct way of life, which we call culture. Hence, there is no human society without culture nor is culture possible in the absence of society. Yet, the concepts, society and culture are abstract in nature. After studying this unit, we shall get a vivid picture of what constitutes a society and its culture.

I. Meaning and Scope of Social Cultural Anthropology

The Branch of Anthropology that concerns with the study of social institutions and the social and cultural aspects of human life is known as Social Cultural Anthropology. Till early 19th century, the term Social Cultural Anthropology was not popular. Almost everyone who was interested in the study of 'primitive' people and their culture was known as Ethnologist. In Britain the major focus of anthropological studies was social relationship or social structure. But in America the early anthropologists gave importance to the understanding of culture or the way of life. In both the countries there are Universities with Social Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology as subjects. In India, which had been influenced by both the British and the American traditions, the term Social Cultural (or Social and Cultural or Socio-Cultural) Anthropology is used increasingly. Hence, the main focus of study of Social Cultural Anthropology is on both social structure and culture. However, in different places without much of a difference this is almost interchangeably referred to as Social Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Socio-Cultural Anthropology, Social and Cultural Anthropology or Social Cultural Anthropology. Yet, all these studies on how human beings live throughout the world are concerned with the similarities and differences among the contemporary cultures and societies.

Familiarity with some of the definitions of Social Cultural Anthropology would help you to make an understanding of its scope.

Definitions

- According to Piddington 'Social Anthropologists study the cultures of contemporary primitive communities'.
- Charles Winick defines Social Anthropology as 'the study of social behaviour especially from the point of view of the systematic and comparative study of social forms and institutions'
- Encyclopedia Britannica defines Social Anthropology 'as a social science engaged in the comparative study of human societies'.
Beals and Hoijer in their book 'Introduction to Anthropology' (1956) state that ‘Cultural Anthropology studies the origin and history of Man’s cultures, their evolution and development and the structure and functioning of human culture in every place and time’.

M.J. Herskovits, in his book 'Man and His Works' (1955) points out that Cultural Anthropology studies the way man has devised to cope with natural settings and social milieu, and how bodies of customs are learnt, retained and handed down from one generation to the next.

Analyse the above definitions, by focusing on the italicised part, find out the characteristics of Social Cultural Anthropology.

- It is a study of pre-literate as well as modern societies
- It is a study of structure and function of societies
- …………………………
- …………………………

Why do we study Social Cultural Anthropology? The answer is quite evident.

*The main aim of social cultural Anthropology is to understand and appreciate the diversity in human behaviour, and ultimately to develop a science of human behaviour. This is attained through the comparison of different people throughout the world.*

All Anthropologists agree that some social cultural features are universal. That means, they are almost common to all cultures. These include family, marriage, kinship, economic organisation, political organisation, religious organisation, social control etc. Social Cultural Anthropologists mainly focus on these universal aspects of culture to study the social relationship. They study how these social institutions have originated and developed. They also study the changes that have occurred in these institutions from the past to the present. As you learned earlier, there are several sub-fields in social cultural anthropology. All these specialised areas are closely related to each other. For instance, in our society, marriage is formalised with the help and in consultation with other members of the family and society. It might involve decision making, religious sanction and ceremonies, economic liability, etc. Hence, the knowledge of the institution of marriage would be incomplete without the knowledge of its links with other institutions like family, religion, economic and political organisation, etc. All these aspects are studied in an interrelated manner, in Social Cultural Anthropology, with an in-depth approach through its specialised fields.
As we have noticed earlier, while studying the social and cultural aspects of human beings, emphasis is seen given either to society or to culture or both. This has become more or less an approach or tradition in Britain and America.

**British and American Traditions**

If you had carefully read the definitions of Social Cultural Anthropology given in the beginning, you would notice that some scholars have used the term Social Anthropology and some others have used the term Cultural Anthropology. You must be curious to know why they have used different titles for dealing with same or similar aspects. Likewise, you might also come across books entitled 'Social Anthropology', 'Cultural Anthropology', as well as 'Social and Cultural Anthropology' as given below:

![Books showing different anthropological traditions](image)

You will be interested to know if there is any difference in the content of their approach, and how these differences came into being.

*Examine the contents of some of these books available in your library or through Internet Browsing and find out for yourself, if there are differences in the subject matter of these books and in their approach, and if so what? Discuss it in groups and prepare a discussion note for presentation.*

Anthropology is a large and diversified subject, which is practiced differently in different nations. The term Social Anthropology is popular in Great Britain and other Commonwealth countries. They emphasise on the study of social structure and social relations. To them, society is more important than culture. Culture cannot exist without human society. So they used the term social anthropology. The British Anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown, W.H.R. Rivers, Malinowski, Evans Pritchard and many others used the term Social Anthropology in their writings. They concentrated on the study of social relations...
such as family, marriage, kinship, economic organisation, political organisation etc.

American Anthropologists on the other hand believed that culture is the most important aspect of human existence. It is culture that makes the human society distinct. They study the origin, development and diversity of culture, and how it is transmitted from generation to generation in different societies. To them, culture includes society and hence they use the term ‘cultural anthropology’. This is evident from the definitions of Erikson and Herskovits, stated above.

Earlier, due to the influence of Britain, the term ‘Social Anthropology’ was used in India also. However, the influence of American anthropologists in Indian soil had changed the Indian perspective in this regard. The Indian anthropologists realised that it is not possible to separate society and culture in Indian context. Hence, they preferred to use the term that synthesised both the usages namely, social and cultural anthropology.

The main focus of Social Cultural anthropology is the study of culture and society. It is essential to have a detailed understanding of these concepts. We have seen earlier that, all of us do not have the same child rearing practices, same type of sheltering, and the same food habits. All these have undergone changes over these years. But take the example of animals. Have the child rearing practices, sheltering, and food habits of animals undergone any change? No. Why is it so? What makes humans different from animal species? The answer is clear. It is the way of life - culture - that makes humans different from animals. Culture is changing. Hence, changes occur in human behaviour and way of life. This concept of culture is the core subject of study in Social Cultural Anthropology.

II. Concept of Culture

A common way of life makes humans unique among other animals. However, all human societies have no common way of life. It is culture which differentiates humans from non-humans and among humans themselves. The term culture is used with different meaning. As a scientific term, culture refers to all the features of a society's way of life like food production, mode of dress, living habits, food preference, art, architecture and layout of
field farms, system of education, beliefs, values, art and literature. Thus, the term culture stands for the sum total of all human behaviour - verbal and non-verbal - and all human-made products - **material and non-material**.

The definitions of culture will help you to understand the concept in a better way.

### Definitions of Culture

- According to M. J Herskovites *"culture is the man-made part of environment"*
- According to Ruth Benedict *"culture is not the content of social life, but it is an order and organisation of social life"*.
- In the words of Bronislaw Kaspar Malinowski *"culture comprises of inherited artifacts, goods, technical process, ideas, habits and values"*.
- The first Anthropological definition of culture was given by Edward Burnet Tylor (1871). To him culture ...... *"is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society"*.

### Analyse the definitions and trace out the characteristics of culture

- Culture is complex
- Culture is created by humans
- Culture consists of material and non-material aspects
- Culture satisfies human need
- Culture is always that of a society and not of an individual
- Culture has the quality of adaptation
- Culture is universal: it exists in all human societies
- Culture is learned: it is obtained through the process of enculturation and not by hereditary
- Culture is diffused to other places through culture-contact
- No culture is inferior or superior
- ........................................
- ........................................
- ........................................
From the above discussion we have seen that all human populations have culture. There is no society in the world without culture. But some cultures are technologically more advanced than others. Some cultures depend completely on nature for their livelihood, while some others depend on the most modern technology for food production. Some are literate and some others are not. The introduction of alphabet created remarkable changes in all areas of human life. Some scholars, especially the early Anthropologists, considered it as a stage of development of culture. They termed it as civilisation.

Culture vis-a-vis Civilisation

You have studied about many civilisations in your previous classes.
- Indus valley civilisation
- ………………………
- ……………………

What are the characteristics of life during these civilisations?
- Housing, drainage, beliefs, ……………, ……………, ………

It is the way of life of the people of that period. Simply we can say that the way of life of a particular society is culture. Some scholars distinguish culture from civilisation and consider civilisation as the peak of development of culture. To them civilisation is characterised by civil social organisation in cities. That means, it is based on non-kinship groups like local kings or rulers. This is in contrast with kinship organisation of traditional society, where family, lineage and clan exerted influence on the members of the society. The evolutionists like E B Tylor, L H Morgan and others considered civilisation as a developed stage of culture. According to them society had passed through three successive stages of development namely, savagery, barbarism and civilisation. Civilisation is characterised by the invention of alphabet and writing. All human societies have culture and civilisation is one form of culture.

Discuss the following points in groups in the context of civilisation and culture.

- No culture is inferior or superior
- Culture is universal
- If so, considering civilisation as a developed form of culture is not appropriate.
Consolidate your conclusions and present in the class.
We have seen that culture comprises visible items like dress, ornaments, house, etc. and invisible items like knowledge, beliefs, morals, norms, customs, values etc. It shows that some of the cultural elements are observable and others not. Invention of alphabet is the characteristic feature of civilization. Can alphabet be included under visible items of culture? Yes, it is visible when it is written. But it is meaningful only to those who recognize it as a symbol. For others, it is only some meaningless figures, mere signs. Hence, it cannot be treated as a visible item of culture. Knowledge of the visible and invisible elements of culture will help you to understand culture in a comprehensive way.

**Material and Non-material Culture**

Culture comprises both material and non-material aspects. Those aspects of culture which are visible are called material culture. According to Malinowski material culture is the physical aspects of culture. It includes house, household articles, vehicles, dress, ornaments, road, weapons, means of transport etc.

The aspects of culture which are not visible are non-material culture. These include knowledge, beliefs, values, religion, social organisation, philosophy, ideas, etc. They can be understood only through close interactions with the people.

List out the material and non-material elements connected with your school and prepare a chart/table.

**Check your progress**

1. Match the columns properly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social anthropology</td>
<td>Indian Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Anthropology</td>
<td>British Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Cultural Anthropology</td>
<td>American Tradition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**III. Concepts related to Culture**

We have seen that the belief systems are important part of culture. There exist different types of belief systems in different cultures. These belief systems have originated and
developed within the worldview of a particular culture. These may not be applicable to other cultures.

*Look at the following conversations. Whose viewpoint is correct?*

What inferences would you get from the above statements?

People often try to judge other cultures with their own cultural standards. This has resulted in creating lots of problems in a multicultural setting. Ethnic violence and cultural conflicts are the results of these attitudes. Anthropology has always advocated against judging other cultures with their own cultural standards. This has resulted in two famous cultural concepts in Anthropology: *ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.*

**Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism**

Ethnocentrism is an attitude of judging other cultures based on the norms and values present in one’s own culture. Most people grow up thinking that their culture is ‘the’ way of life and that of others' is strange and meaningless. It is mainly because we consider our own culture to judge other cultures. This attitude is called ethnocentrism.

Now, we know that the terms like ‘primitive’, ‘savage’, ‘barbarians’ and so on had been used in an ethnocentric sense even by the anthropologists. It is because, such ethnocentric
attitude dominated the studies of other cultures, during colonial period. The British, who considered their life, language and culture superior to others, thought that it was 'white men's burden' to civilise the colonies.

Opposite to ethnocentrism is the attitude of cultural relativism (Some use the term 'ethno relativism'). It is based on the idea that each culture must be understood in its own standards. The beliefs and values of a culture should not be used to judge other cultures. The idea of cultural relativism holds the view that no culture is inferior or superior. One is not better than others. Each culture contains its own unique pattern of behaviour. So, each culture must be judged on the basis of its own norms and values. The attitude of cultural relativism aims to respect and appreciate cultural diversities.

The attitude of relativism can be developed by learning other cultures, by way of making friendship, by sharing food, by reading books, listening to music and by appreciating the differences of other cultures. The most important and valuable contribution of anthropology to humanity is the concept of cultural relativism.

Examine the above conversations and discuss the following points in your groups:

- Is it possible to take a cultural relativistic stand, in a multi-ethnic cultural setting like India?
- How far cultural relativism and violation of human rights go hand in hand?

What are your findings and conclusions? Present it in the form of a report.
Each culture views its belief and values as good and upright. For example, the practice of untouchability, infanticide, and similar other practices are not considered as evil by an insider (native). But the perception of other cultures may be different. This shows that what an insider considers as culture may be different from that of an outsider's perception. Anthropologists understand this difference mainly because they study 'other cultures'. These two views of culture can be understood by studying the concepts of emic and etic.

**Emic and Etic Culture**

What the people think about their own culture is emic and what an outsider thinks about a culture other than his own is etic. The term emic refers to what insiders do and grasp about their own culture. It includes people's view of reality and their explanation of why they do and the way they do.

Observe the emic and etic views from the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emic view</th>
<th>Etic view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a local belief that the nails and hair removed from the body are not to be thrown in the open space, because there is a chance of the same being used for black magic causing harm to the person concerned.</td>
<td>The etic side of it may be that throwing nails and hairs carelessly is not hygienic, and it will in turn mix up with food materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Hindu families, the elders do not allow the coconut piece (half) open inside the home saying that it is done on the occasion of death.</td>
<td>Keeping half of the coconut open will lead to the coconut becoming dry and unfit for use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you know?

The words *emic* and *etic* had been coined by a linguist Kennath Pike. It has been taken from the words *phonemic* and *phonetic*.

Cultural Anthropologists and Ethnographers always try to draw an emic view of culture through participant observation. In ethnographic research, the researcher attempts to compare the natives' (insiders') view of culture with that of an outsider. The view of a native on the meaning and importance of her/his own culture and the perception of an
outsider about same are equally important. Local statements, perceptions, categories and opinions help the ethnographers to understand how culture works within. At the same time, an etic view could look to other explanations in an objective way without being coloured by the emic view. Furthermore, the emic view might represent the hidden rationality of a particular belief which the insiders might not be conscious of. To be holistic in one's study, the researcher should utilise both these views.

Collect the local beliefs and practices known to you and find out the emic and etic meaning of those beliefs and practices.

You have studied about material and non-material culture. You must now be able to list out the material and non-material cultural elements of your classroom. How far can these elements be divided further in a meaningful way? By taking your classroom as a whole, try to list out all its elements. These would include bench, desk, table, chair, chalk, window, teaching, learning, friendship, respect, feelings, etc. Can you divide these elements into further meaningful units? For example if the desk is divided further, it might lose its use-value and meaning. Cultural elements can be divided into the smallest meaningful units, as minute aspects of culture. So, the study of smallest and indivisible unit of a culture is indispensable for a holistic understanding of culture.

Culture Trait and Culture Complex

The smallest and indivisible unit of a culture is called 'culture trait'. It is the smallest functional unit of a culture. If it is divided further, there will be no meaning or function. Cultural trait can be material or non-material. Material traits include house, radio, mobile phone, watch, television, furniture, dress and ornaments and non-material traits include beliefs,
values, knowledge, concepts, symbols, gestures, world views, customs, traditions, hand-shake, greetings, touching of feet, blessing, kissing, sprinkling of water on idols, saluting flag, walking barefoot etc.

Large number of cultural traits that combine to form a meaningful segment of culture is called a culture complex. A cultural trait will be meaningless, if it is separated from the culture complex. For example, a chalk, as a cultural trait, is important only if it is a part of classroom education. When it is separated from classroom and put in an agricultural situation, it will be meaningless. School, Family, religion, factory, agriculture, etc. are examples of culture complexes. If kitchen is considered as a culture complex, then the items like stove, utensil, mixer grinder, cooker, fridge, knife, glass, plate, the knowledge of making and preserving food are all culture traits.

List out the cultural traits taking family, religion, marriage etc. as cultural complexes, and present the same in the form of a chart.

Family is the basic social unit for the process of enculturation

You must have seen the children involved in family role-play, taking up different roles such as that of father, mother or sibling. From where did these children learn this game? It is a type of role imitation. They have seen their mother, father or other members in the family, in different roles. The children imitate their elders. Similarly, we have imbibed unconsciously many things from our family.

- How did you learn the way of praying and performing rituals?
- How did you learn to behave with other members in the society?
- From where did you learn the way of addressing your relatives?
  - Observing and imitating parents
  - .........................
  - .........................
Enculturation

Enculturation refers to the process by which one learns the way of life and behaviour of one's own culture. It will help the person to become an active participant of that culture. An individual can participate in the society, only if he/she learns the norms and values that exist in the society. A child learns toilet training, the way of addressing relatives (kinship terms), the way to behave with elders in the family, the beliefs and practices of his/her culture by imitating and observing. Thus by imitating the elders in the society children acquire the knowledge of role which each person had to perform, the role of father, mother, grandmothers etc... How to face problems, how to co-operate with others, way of welcoming others, (hospitality), manners and how to look after the aged people are to be imparted through family itself. The process of enculturation starts from birth and ends only at death. After learning the basic behaviour from family, the person enters into society. When the individual encounters new situations each time in his/her life, one has to learn further lessons of behaviour based on his/her basic learning. Even a grown-up person has to understand how to tackle with one's occupation, how to interact with the spouse, in-laws etc. So enculturation is a continuous process. The major agencies of enculturation include parents, family members, elders, peer groups and society.

Sometimes a person learns other cultures willingly or unwillingly. For example, the tribal children, though they have their own language or dialect to transact, learn the language of other cultures while in contact. Likewise, a person is compelled to learn another language while interacting with people in a new situation. In both these cases, original culture might
undergo change due to the influence of other culture. Anthropologists take interest in the study of this process of culture change.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation refers to the changes that occur in one's culture due to continuous contact with other culture. It occurs when one culture dominates over other culture(s). It may happen intentionally or accidentally. For instance, Indian culture has undergone changes due to continuous contact with western culture. Similarly tribal cultures in India and elsewhere also witness widespread changes due to the contact with non-tribal cultures.

Due to the political and technological changes in the past decades, isolated indigenous populations all over the world are losing their identities. There are various forms of acculturation like *deculturation* and *transculturation*.

**Deculturation** is the process by which a culture loses its cultural identity due to contact with other cultures. Many tribal cultures are losing their identity under domination of external cultures.

**Transculturation** is the process of exchange of cultural traits among different cultures. Indian culture adopting English language and the European culture adopting Ayurveda are examples of transculturation.

*Find out instances of acculturation, deculturation, and transculturation from the situations known to you. List out those instances of acculturation and present it in your class.*

**Culture Shock**

Imagine a situation when you encounter an entirely different culture, with a strange language, food pattern, housing pattern and belief system. The problem may sometimes be simple or hazardous. List out the problems which you are likely to face in such a situation:

- Problem of communication
- Problem of food
- 


Such a situation may include strangeness in the material culture, food ways, dress pattern, ideas, concepts, beliefs, practices etc. The whole set of feeling towards an unfamiliar situation can be called as culture shock. Culture shock is the psychological or social maladjustment, experienced when people encounter a strange cultural situation for the first time. It is a frightening feeling of alienation. It may result in adjustment problems. When a person is compelled to live in another culture where snake meat is delivered as regular food item, it will be a culture shock as far as that particular individual is concerned. Individuals differ in their ability to adapt with new situations. Ethnocentric people are more exposed to culture shocks. On the other hand, cultural relativists may find it easy to adapt to new situations, and overcome from culture shock.

Anthropologists who were trying to explore the different cultures, with their approach of cultural relativism also experience culture shock.

Do Anthropologists get culture shock in the field?

My first impression of Bahia community was of smells. Alien odors of ripe and decaying mangoes, bananas and passion fruits and swatting of the fruit flies which I had never seen before. …… There were strange mixture of rice, black beans and unidentifiable meat and floating pieces of skin. … I remember one oatmeal soup and a slimy stew of beef tongue in tomatoes. At one meal a disintegrating fish head, eyes still attached, but barely stared up at me……………. Gradually the smells, sounds, sensations and taste grew familiar to me.


Did you ever come across the situation of culture shock in your life? Write an account.

There is widespread technological advancement in all spheres of life especially, during the last decade. You might have seen that even the older generation could not escape from adapting to these latest technologies. Mobile phones, internet, transport, and other modern amenities have made life more 'convenient' to a section of people. Even then, some people are not ready to change their traditional beliefs and way of life. For instance, there are people who are reluctant to change their beliefs regarding supernatural causes of disease. Why is this so? Anthropologists are of the opinion that the non-material aspect of culture changes very slowly as compared to the material aspects of culture.

Culture Lag

W.F. Ogburn in his book 'Social Change' introduced the concept 'culture lag'. According to him, compared to non-material aspects of culture including beliefs, values,
moral etc. material culture changes more rapidly. In other words, the non-material part always lags behind the material part. The gap between the rate of changes in the material and the non-material culture is referred to as 'culture lag'.

Due to the rapid development of science and technology, our material culture had undergone radical changes. We have constructed roads, railways, airports, dams, big houses, etc. Now, we are more exposed to the latest electronic devices. During the last 200 years in India, much of the material culture has been borrowed from the west and many cities in India have been competing with western towns in the adoption of the latest aspects of material culture. Culture is changing very rapidly in areas like fashion, dress, artifacts, beautification, art and recreation. However, the pace of change has been very slow in the sphere of religious beliefs and cultural values. We have always experienced a gap between the changes in these two aspects of culture. This is called culture lag.

**Check your progress:**

1. Match the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visible aspects of culture</td>
<td>Culture trait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest functional unit of culture</td>
<td>Cultural relativism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs, values and morals in a culture</td>
<td>Enculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering one's own culture superior</td>
<td>Deculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child learn the kinship terms</td>
<td>Ethnocentrism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even though economy is developed the status of women does not change</td>
<td>Non-material culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each culture has its' own values</td>
<td>Material culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal people lost their original culture due to culture contact</td>
<td>Culture lag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Find the odd one and justify.
   - Family, trade union, political party, student association

3. Make pairs by using the following culture trait and culture complexes.
   - (Father, Agriculture, Prayer, Blackboard, School, Sickle, Religion, Family)
We have examined different aspects of culture, which is one of the central themes of Social Cultural Anthropology. Another important theme of Social Cultural Anthropology is Society. The concept of society has different connotations in different contexts. You might have already learned what a society is in your previous classes. You have already heard about different types of societies like Girijan Co-operative Society, Milk society, Tribal society, Kerala society, Urban society etc. Do humans alone have society? No, ants, wolves and bees have societies. Then, what are the differences between human society and the societies found among other organisms? We often use the term society in our daily life without knowing the exact meaning of the concept. In this part of the unit, we will examine the various aspects related to the concept of society.

IV. Concept of Society: Meaning and Definition

A society is composed of individuals. They interact with each other on the basis of some shared behaviour. It is a network of relationship between individuals. So the essence of society is social relationship and social behaviour. This social behaviour shared by the members, known as culture. Thus, society is composed of people who are interacting on the basis of shared beliefs, values and activities.

In a limited sense, the grouping of bees and ants can also be called as societies as it is composed of members who are interacting on the basis of certain shared behaviour. But society among animals is instinctual in nature, formed to meet the basic requirements of physical needs, and reproduction.

In human society, members are recruited by means of reproduction within the group. On rare occasions, members are recruited through enslavement, immigration, adoption or conquest.

On the other hand, the members in occupational or service societies like labour co-operative society, milk co-operative society, etc. are not recruited by means of reproduction. They are made up of some individuals with limited goals.
In short, the basic characteristics of human society can be summed up as the following:

- It has a definite territory
- It has a culture
- It is a permanent, independent, and integrated group
- Members are recruited by means of reproduction

According to Maclver and Page, society is 'the web of social relationships'.

According to Ralph Linton, society is an organised group of individuals. A culture is an organised group of learned responses, characteristics of a particular society.

In the words of S F Nadal, culture is the way of life of people while a society is an organised, interacting aggregate of individuals who follow given way of life.

Every society is governed by a set of standardised way of behaviour. These standardised behaviour controls the activities of the members in the society.

**Culture and Society**

The terms culture and society are frequently used interchangeably. In simple terms, society is always made up of people and the way they behave is culture. A society is not a culture but it has culture. Culture, on the other hand, is a product of society. It refers to the material aspects as well as ideas, meaning and knowledge that people share. Culture belongs to a body of people who share a common tradition. Society and culture are the two sides of the same coin. The emphasis on one over the other has been the hallmark of the two traditions in Anthropology, namely, Social Anthropology of British Tradition and the Cultural Anthropology of the American tradition which you had learned earlier.

Prepare a chart distinguishing the characteristics of society and culture and present the same in the class.

Society and community are often used synonymously. For instance, Indian society/community, Chinese society/community, Tribal society/community, etc. However, though both the terms are related, they are different and have distinct meaning. The term society has a broader implication while the term community is a restricted implication. For instance, we talk of the Indian community settled in the United States; but use the term Indian
society while referring to the collective entity of all the people in India. In Malayalam language, the term community is translated as 'samudayam', and the term society as 'samooham', and the term culture as 'samskaram'. All these three terms in Malayalam have a common character implying collectivity.

**Community**

According to Maclver and Page, community refers to a group, small or large, whose members live together in such a way that they share the basic condition of common life. It is a small cultural system and its members derive their personal identity from their community membership. Caste and tribe are some of the examples of community. Some communities like the tribes, live in a common geographical boundary and share common economic resources. All people possess the feeling of community sentiments in thinking, thought, ideologies and common cause of activities.

**Activity:**

*Prepare a chart, distinguishing the characteristics of society and community.*

You have to behave in schools as per the norms and rules. Similarly, as a member of a society you are guided by the norms and values. The society executes these norms and values through family, marriage, religion and many other social institutions.

**Institution**

The aspect of culture that is governed by a standardised way of behaviour existing in a society is called institution. According to Radcliffe Brown, institutions involve socially approved pattern of behaviour of members. It is guided by the norms and values existing in the society.

Family is a social institution. There exist different norms of behaviour between the members in a family. Deviation from the rule is not permitted or accepted. The status and role of each individual in a society are also controlled by this institutionalised behaviour. Marriage, economic organisation, political organisation, kinship etc. are other social institutions.

Anthropologists study social institutions like family, marriage, kinship etc. as cultural universals. In order to understand the culture of a given society, different institutions and its inter-relationship must be studied. All the institutions are interrelated and integrated.
Besides these social institutions, there exist different groups in each society, which are known as associations.

**Association**
- Have you heard the name of any Association?
- Are you a member of any of the Associations such as Students' Association, Alumni Association, Residents association .......... etc.

There are some other associations like police associations, teachers associations, etc.

All these are formed with a specific objective. Association refers to a group of persons formed with a specific objective or a set of objectives. They are relatively small and localised. The members of an association try to satisfy their needs which do not come under the purview of the social institutions like family. Each association has its own specific guidelines of behaviour for its members. Important features of Association include the following:

- Associations are formed for specific purpose
- Membership is optional
- It is a temporary group (once the target is achieved, it may get dispersed)
- It is not restricted to a particular area
- It provides a code of behaviour for all its members.
- In modern times, associations are adaptive devices to fight for the rights of individuals and groups.

**Prepare a digital presentation distinguishing the characteristics of society, community, institution and association.**
Group

Like associations, individuals with common interest join together to form different groups. Associations are different from Groups.

List out the names of the groups in which you are members.

- Play group (Cricket, Football, Tennis etc.)
- Family
- ----------------
- ----------------
- ----------------

Individuals having common interests may join together to form a group. S F Nadel (1951) defines group as a collection of individuals who stand in a regular and relatively permanent relationship.

In some groups, all the members have face to face relation and interact with each other. This type of group is known as primary group. For example, family, local club, plays group, tribal settlement, or a village community.

Sometimes, large scale social organisations are formed in a society based on profession, political affiliation, occupation etc. They are secondary groups. All members in a secondary group may not know each other. But they become its members with view of common goal. Trade unions, professional associations, political groups and religious groups, are some examples of secondary groups.

Group can also be based on relationships. If the members of a group are related through blood or by marriage, it is known as kin group. Family, lineage and clan are kin groups.

Among different groups, family is regarded as universal and permanent. A person who is a
member of one group could be a member of many other groups like family, lineage, clan, caste and religion.

It is this inter-connection that maintains the society. Working or functioning of a society means working or functioning of different institutions, associations and groups within it.

Analyse the above chart and make inferences and present in the class.

Check your progress

1. Differentiate between institution and association.
2. Fill the table with the features of society and culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Culture</th>
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V. Status and Role

An individual, being a member of an association or group or institution, has a position in that group. Corresponding to one's position, one has to perform some duties also. The positions and duties of an individual have to be examined to understand the social relationships.

At home you have some duties to perform. What are they? But when at school your duties may change according to the situation? What does it show? The duties or roles change according to the situations and positions.

The position, which an individual occupies in the society, is called status. The duty, which a person has to perform according to one's status, is role. The position of an individual determines the duties one has to perform. A person could be a father, son, husband or brother at home. He may be an officer, workman, or a labourer outside his home. He is expected to perform certain duties that are associated with his different positions.
Status also implies ranking. It refers to one's ranking in relationship to other positions. For instance, the ranking of a leader is always at the top of the group. Social status is to be recognised by prestige. For example in school or college, the status of Principal and students are different.

There is no status without role, and there is no role without status. Each status consists of a related role. *A set of duties associated with a single status is called role.*

**Status: Ascribed and Achieved**

Generally there are two types of statuses: one occupied by a person by birth and the second occupied through one's own effort. The status which an individual occupies by birth is called *ascribed status* and the status which an individual acquires through one's own effort is known as *achieved status*.

*The status of women in Kerala is relatively high in comparison with many other states in India. There could be various reasons for this. Discuss in groups how the change in the status of women reflects in their roles. Based on the discussion, prepare a note for presentation.*

**Check your progress**

1. Prepare a chart showing different status and roles of a teacher, who is head of a school, family and an arts club.

2. Prepare a chart showing two types of status with examples.
VI. Social Structure and Social Organisation

You know the term structure, which means, the arrangement of parts in relationship to each other. What is the structure of an automobile engine? It is the arrangements of parts. The structure of our body means the arrangement of organs. Likewise, institutions are arranged in a society as parts in a machine or organs in a body. That means, institutions are the parts in a society. Individuals are arranged in different social institutions. That means individuals are the parts in a social institution.

The arrangement of activities in an automobile engine is its organisation. Similarly, the arrangements of activities of individuals and institutions in a society form social organisation. The study of social structure and social organisation is inevitable in understanding the functioning of society.

Social Structure: Structure is the ordered arrangement of parts. A structure of a classroom consists of the arrangement of windows, doors, walls, black board, benches, desks and so on. The basic elements of a society are individuals. They are arranged in different institutions and groups in relationship to each other. The basic institutions of a society consist of family, marriage, kinship, economic organisation, political organisation, etc. In short, social structure is arrangement of individuals in these social institutions in relationship to each other. These arrangements help for the smooth functioning of the society.

Social Organisation: How does a class room function? How are the duties of the teachers and students organised? A class room through the collective organisation of students, teachers, and the principal functions on the basis of syllabus, time table, rules and regulations of the institutions.

Social organisation is the way by which the activities of different parts of the society are organised. The arrangement of the activities of the individuals and groups in the society is social organisation. Thus, social structure is the arrangement of persons in different social institutions while social organisation is the arrangement of the activities of these institutions.

“Components of social structure are human beings. The structure itself being an arrangement of persons in relationship institutionally defined and regulated”

Radcliffe Brown (1952) : Structure and Function in Primitive Society
Find out the structure and organisation of the following and make a presentation of the same in the class:

(a) A family  (b) A factory  (c) A political organization

VII. Ethnography and Ethnology

The concept of society and culture, and its various components like culture trait, culture complex, status, roles, association, community, group, etc. have been discussed above. You know that the central theme of social cultural anthropology is the study of society and culture. To understand society and culture in its comprehensive sense, anthropologists depended on simple societies. They studied the way of life of these societies and compared them with other societies to understand cultural similarities and cultural diversities. Most of the studies in anthropology earlier were categorised under ethnography and ethnology.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a simple and holistic description of a particular culture, at a particular period of time. An ethnographer collects data through direct interaction with the people. The settlement pattern, dressing, food habits, economic activities, political organization, family, marriage, kinship, beliefs, practices, rituals, customs, etc. are studied in detail in ethnographic studies. Ethnographic studies had been a primary concern of Social Anthropology from its very beginning.

For an ethnographic study, two types of data are required, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data consists of data pertaining to population, male-female ratio, size of houses, number and size of different types of house hold equipment, quantity of crops produced, income, quantity of material used and so on. Qualitative data include data pertaining to beliefs, sentiments, knowledge, social network of family, marriage, kinship, religious beliefs, practices and life cycle rituals, etc. Data collection in ethnography is primarily based on field work. Ethnographic field work involves living in close contact with the people under study. As all aspects of culture are related, the ethnographer must study the whole of social life, in relationship to each other. In ethnographic research, the researcher usually selects small-scale societies.

Brief History of Ethnographic Studies

Beginning of ethnographic studies can be traced back to the period of Herodotus in
The travelogues produced by the explorers including Marco Polo, Columbus, Vasco-de-Gama and others during the era of exploration in the 15th and 16th centuries brought out wonderful and exotic accounts of the people living in remote corners of the non-European regions of the world. The Christian missionaries, in the process of their work of conversion carried out studies of different cultures of the people in different parts of the world.

Scientific ethnographic studies were started during end of 19th century. E.B. Tylor started field work to understand the culture. He stayed one year in United States and six months among the Mexicans to collect first hand information. Though he was not a real field worker, he verified the data collected by his students to ensure the accuracy. L.H. Morgan of America published the book 'League of Iroquois' (1951) based on the field work among the Iroquois tribes of America. He interviewed many Iroquois people and collected data on their dance forms, religious beliefs, customs and traditions, language, material culture, form of government, family organisation etc. As he was ignorant of the native language, he utilised the help of an interpreter called Ely Parker throughout his study.

Meanwhile, European administrators also tried to study the people of their colonies in their attempt to "civilise and rule" the colonies. In this context, the contribution of Edgar Thurston, 'The Castes and Tribes of South India' is worth mentioning. Many Anthropologists

Why Social Cultural Anthropologists have shown special interest in the study of pre-literate societies?

Most of the early Anthropologists were engaged in the study of 'primitive' or pre-literate societies. It was mainly to understand the way of development of modern societies through the study of living people with simple technologies. Pre-literate societies are different from non-literate societies. Non-literates are the contemporaries of historical people with access to writing. On the other hand, the pre-literates are those who lived prior to or away from the historical people or the mainstream population. Pre-literate or the so-called primitive people were relatively simple in their technologies and material possessions as compared to the historical societies. They were small in number, homogeneous, lived in relatively isolated places and had little contact with the outside world. However at present anthropologists study all types of societies irrespective of pre-literate or literate, simple or complex, rural or urban societies.

Do you know?

Herodotus is the father of Greek Ethnographic studies.

Herodotus travelled to different places and met more than 50 different groups of people and described their culture. He was considered as the father of Greek Ethnographic studies.

the 3rd century BC.
were appointed by the British, to study the native culture of their colonies. By the beginning of 20th century, W.H.R. Rivers, a British Social Anthropologist, came to India to study the Toda tribe of Nilgiri Hills in Tamil Nadu. His monograph The Toda was published in 1906. During 1906-1908, Radcliffe-Brown, the student of W.H.R. Rivers conducted field work among the tribes of Andaman Nicobar Island, and his book ‘The Andaman Islanders’ was published in 1922. In 1912, ethnography on the tribe Munda, titled ‘Munda and Their Country’, was published by S.C. Roy. He was the first Indian Scholar who conducted an Ethnographic study of an Indian tribe. Hence, S.C. Roy was considered as the father of Indian Ethnography.

However, significant change in the approach of Ethnographic study was brought by Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski. He conducted three years of intensive field work (1914-1918) among the tribes of Trobriand Island. He used the method of total Participant observation, and followed the native language throughout his study. It was a turning point in the field approach of Anthropology and hence, he was known as the father of field work tradition in Anthropology.

His book, based on the field work among the Trobriand Islanders was published as ‘The Argonauts of Western Pacific’ in 1922. It made a new beginning in Ethnographic studies. Since then, following the method of Malinowski, a large number of ethnographic studies were published by different scholars throughout the world.

*Practice of early anthropologists in documenting endangered cultures was called Salvage ethnography or urgent ethnography*

Ethnographic studies were conducted in Kerala on different castes and tribes by different scholars. The earliest of such studies was the 'Castes and Tribes of Cochin' by L.K Anandakrishna Iyer, published in 1911. Later, he was invited to head the First Department of Anthropology in the University of Calcutta in 1920. He is widely considered as the father of Indian Ethnology. His son, L.K. Krishna Iyer produced the work Travancore Tribes and Castes and his grandson Bala Ratnam became the third in the line to continue...
this tradition of Anthropology. Some of the recent examples of ethnographic studies in Kerala include Rajalakshmi's study of 'Mullukkurumbas of Kappala'. A. Ayyappan's study 'Iravas and Culture Change', P.R.G. Mathur's study of the 'Mappila Fisherfolks of Kerala' and Ananda Bhanu's study of 'Cholanaickan, the Cave Men of Kerala'.

**Check your progress:**

1. Fill the blanks areas suitably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Scholar</th>
<th>Community studied</th>
<th>Book Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.H.R Rivers</td>
<td>...................................</td>
<td>The Toda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radcliffe Brown</td>
<td>Tribes of Andaman island</td>
<td>.........................</td>
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<tr>
<td>..................</td>
<td>Trobriand Islanders</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.C.Roy</td>
<td>.........................</td>
<td>Munda and their Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Ayyappan</td>
<td>.........................</td>
<td>Iravas and Culture change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepare an ethnography of your own Caste/Community. You can utilise the following hints and refer the brief sketches of ethnographic reports given in appendix.

**Ethnographic Profile of a Community**

I. Name and area of the community for study
   (1) Name of the community, its synonym and etymology
   (2) Present day distribution
   (3) Mother tongue
   (4) Other languages spoken

II. Entering the community
   (1) Permission of the local government officers
   (2) Co-operation of community elders
### III Ethnographic Details

1. **Food habits**: Staple food, drinks, smoking etc.
2. **Social**: What are the major social divisions/groupings and their hierarchical order, if any in the community? What are the chief functions of these sub-divisions?
3. **Institution of marriage**: What are the marriage rules? Age of marriage, bride price/dowry. Rule of residence after marriage. Rules regarding divorce
4. **Family pattern**: Types/forms of family, rules of inheritance in family, succession pattern; Inter-family linkages in and outside the community.
5. **Life cycle rituals**: What are the major rituals observed on the occasion/state of (a) birth (and how names are given) (b) adolescence (c) marriage (d) death and (e) any other function. Any significant changes reported lately in the ritual performance.
6. **Economic activities**: What are the major resources? Occupation of the community: (a) traditional (b) primary and (c) subsidiary. The marker system, forms of trade, barter exchange etc. Patron client relationship (jajmani system) or any other form of socio-economic interdependence changes that have come about after independence in various economic pursuits.
7. **Mechanism of social control**: What are the traditional and statutory councils and the regional associations (sabha) in the community? Composition and function of such councils/ regional associations. Forms of punishment and reward.
8. **Religious attributes**: Mention religion the community professes. What are the main family, clan, village and regional deities? What are the major sacred centres/shrines/pilgrimages. Role of ritual specialists. What are the major festivals and significance associated with them? Changes in religious organisation of the community.
9. **Intercommunity linkages**: Traditional linkages and Modern linkages.
10. **Impact of development programmes**: Literacy and education, health, drinking water, employment and self employment, communication, electricity, and any other parameters.

### IV Any other observations of importance concerning life and culture of the community.

### V Writing Report

The following points should be taken up appropriately, in a report

- Title and subtitle
- Statement of the problem
- Objectives of the study
- Description of the studies related to the problem
- Methodology: area of group selection, sampling, specific hypothesis, techniques used for study
- Organisation of data: description and analysis and presentation of quantitative data in table, graphs, photographs etc.
Ethnology

Ethnology is the comparative study of races and cultures. In Britain, Social Anthropology was earlier known as Ethnology. Ethnologists classify people on the basis of their distribution. It looks at people from an etic point of view. Ethnology can also be called as a historical study. It is different from ethnography. While ethnography requires primary data and close relationship with people, ethnology does not require direct interaction with the people. Ethnology can be based on different ethnographic studies. The important features of ethnology can be listed as below:

- Ethnology is narrative
- Ethnology is historical
- Ethnology is comparative
- It can be based on ethnographies.
- It need not be based on primary data.
- It studies cultures at different times and in different places.

Now you are familiarised with the contents of Ethnology and Ethnography. Prepare a chart showing the difference between the two.

Let us sum up

- The Branch of Anthropology that concerns with the study of social institutions and the social and cultural aspects of human life is known as Social Cultural Anthropology. Some scholars have used the term Social Anthropology and some others have used the term Cultural Anthropology. The term Social Anthropology is popular in Great Britain and other Commonwealth countries. Cultural anthropology is popular in America. In India, the term social cultural anthropology is in vogue.
The first Anthropological definition of culture was given by Edward Burnet Tylor (1871). To him culture ......"is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society".

Some scholars distinguish culture from civilisation and consider civilisation as the peak of development of culture. Culture comprises both material and non-material aspects.

Two famous cultural concepts in Anthropology: ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. Ethnocentrism is an attitude of judging other cultures based on the norms and values present in one's own culture. Opposite to ethnocentrism is the attitude of cultural relativism.

The two views of culture can be understood by studying the concepts of Emic and Etic. What the people think about their own culture is emic and what an outsider thinks about a culture other than his own is etic.

The smallest and indivisible unit of a culture is called ‘culture trait’. Large number of culture traits that combine together to form a meaningful segment of culture is called a culture complex.

Enculturation refers to the process by which an individual learns the way of life and behaviour of his own culture.

Acculturation refers to the changes that occur in one's culture due to continuous contact with another culture.

Culture shock is the psychological or social maladjustment, experienced when people encounter a strange cultural situation for the first time. Ethnocentric people are more exposed to culture shock. A gap between the changes in the material and non-material aspects of culture is called culture lag.

A society is not a culture but it has culture. Culture, on the other hand, is a product of society.

Community refers to a group, small or large, whose members live together in such a way that they share the basic condition of common life.

Institutions involve socially approved pattern of behaviour of members. It is guided by the norms and values existing in the society. Family, marriage and religion are institutions.
Association refers to a group of persons formed with a specific objective or a set of objectives.

Like associations, individuals with common interest join together to form different groups. Associations are different from Groups. There are primary and secondary groups.

An individual, being a member of an association or group or institution, has a position in that group. Corresponding to one's position, one has to perform some duties also. The status which an individual occupies by birth is called ascribed status and the status which an individual acquires through one's own effort is known as achieved status.

Social structure is the arrangements of individuals in society. The arrangement of the activities of the individuals and groups in the society is social organisation.

Ethnographic studies had been a primary concern of Social Anthropology from its very beginning. It is the descriptive study of a culture.

Ethnology is the comparative study of races and cultures.

The learner demonstrate the ability to

- Analyse the meaning of social cultural anthropology and appreciate the British, American and Indian traditions.
- Identify the meaning and definition of culture, elucidate its characteristics and components and differentiate culture from civilisation.
- Distinguish the different concepts related to culture and ascertain its application.
- Distinguish the concept of society from culture and delineate various terms and concepts associated with society.
- Ascertain the concepts of role and status and appreciate their application in day to day life situation.
- Analyse the meaning of social structure and delineate it from social organisation.
- Identify the difference between ethnology and ethnography and write auto ethnography.
Evaluation Items

1. While arranging some books in the Library, the Librarian asked you 'Why do the books having same content, have different titles like 'Social Anthropology', 'Cultural Anthropology, 'and Social Cultural Anthropology' etc. How will you explain to her about these differences? Explain this based on different traditions of Anthropology.

2. Do you think culture is universal? Identify the universal elements found in all cultures of the world.

3. Identify the cultural traits from your locality and arrange them into various cultural complexes, and explain the relationship between both.

4. 'Working of the society is the workings of social institutions' explain this based on the analysis of different social institutions like, family, marriage etc.

5. 'Family is a social institution and a primary group' justify this statement based on your knowledge of institution and group.

6. Prepare a time line showing major turning points in the development of field work for ethnographic studies in anthropology.

7. Prepare auto ethnography.

8. Classify the following terms under two suitable headings:
   (Descriptive, racial distribution, comparative study, field work, a culture, secondary data, monograph, two or more cultures.)

9. Prepare 10 objective questions and their answers for conducting a quiz competition in your class on the topic 'Concepts of Society and Culture'.
Appendix

Brief Ethnography of the Toda

The Toda is a pastoral tribe who live in the Nilgiri hills of South India. The Todas live there with four other tribes namely Badaga, Kota, Kurumba and Irula. They are tall, fair, with long and narrow nose, long head with black wavy hair. The word Toda has been derived from the name 'Tundra' - the sacred tree of the Todas. Numerical strength of Toda population is very low and government have taken some important measures to protect them.

Material culture: The Todas present a classic example of pastoral economy. They know neither hunting nor agriculture, and rear only buffaloes. They make various products like ghee, cheese, butter, curd from milk of buffaloes. These products are partially consumed by themselves and the rest is sold or exchanged with the neighbouring tribal communities.

Division of labour: Each family is engaged in caring large number of buffaloes. The males of the house take the animals to the field regularly. In the morning the females are not allowed to enter into the dairy house because of the taboo - Milk is indispensable in the socio-religious life of the tribe. Milking is done twice a day - early in the morning and in the evening. The buffaloes are of two types, some are regarded as the ordinary type and other are sacred. The ordinary buffaloes are maintained by an individual family for ordinary use, whereas sacred buffaloes are kept in the special shed. Milk from the sacred buffaloes is offered to gods.

Food: The Todas are purely vegetarians. Their favourite dish is rice, boiled in milk. They also prefer curd, churned milk and plain milk. They take vegetables and green leaves as their principal meals. Meat of the sacrificed buffaloes is considered as sacred, so they take this during annual festivals. Both males and females of the Toda community are addicted to liquor. The habit of smoking also prevails among both the sexes.

Reciprocity: The markets of the Todas are actually the homes of the neighbouring people. Neighbouring communities like Badaga supply them agricultural products in exchange of milk, the Kotas supply the various utensils made of clay and iron and the Irula and Kurumba, the hunting gathering group bring different forest products like honey fruit, tubers, vegetables etc.

Settlement: The Toda village consists of ten to twelve huts called 'Mandu'. The huts are of two types. The first type is half-barrel in shape. A hut is divided into two portions, inside
room and outside room. Inside room is used as a workshop where the females have no entry. The outside room is meant for living and other house hold work. The second type of hut is not barrel in shape. It is circular in shape and made of stone. This type of hut is used to keep the sacred buffaloes.

**Dress:** Todas are simple people. The males use a long strip of white loin cloth which has to be thrown over the shoulders, after covering the waist. This is their traditional dress. Sometimes they use colourful cloth for covering the upper part of their body. Women use long thick cloth covering almost the entire body. They keep long hair in plait. They use ornaments like ear-rings, nose-rings, nose pin etc. The Toda women are expert needle workers.

**Social Organisation:** Todas are endogamous, marriage alliances occur exclusively within the tribe. The tribe is divided into two subdivisions called moiety - Tartharol and Teivaliol. Each of these two moieties are again endogamous. The members of Thartharol consider themselves superior to the Teivaliol.

**Family:** Todas exhibit polyandrous type of family. A woman with her multiple husbands and children usually form this type of family. The husbands may or may not be brothers. Children are known after their ‘mother’.