UGC-NET

SOCIOLOGY

National Testing Agency (NTA)

PAPER 2 || VOLUME – 2

UGC NET Paper – 2 (SOCIOLOGY)

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1: Introduction to Sociological Concepts and Social Structure, Culture

1. Overview of Basic Concepts and Institutions

1.1 Definition and Scope

Unit 3 covers foundational sociological concepts, institutions, stratification, and change processes:

- **Sociological Concepts**: Frameworks like social structure, culture, and identity for understanding social life.
- **Social Institutions**: Organized systems (e.g., family, religion) shaping behavior.
- **Social Stratification**: Hierarchies and inequalities (e.g., caste, gender).
- **Social Change and Processes**: Mechanisms like modernization and globalization driving societal transformation.
- **Scope**: Analyzes social organization, inequality, and dynamics, bridging micro (e.g., identity) and macro (e.g., globalization) perspectives, with a focus on Indian society.

1.2 Relevance

- **Conceptual Clarity**: Definitions (e.g., social structure, norms).
- **Indian Applications**: Caste, family, and social mobility in Indian contexts.
- **Theoretical Analysis**: Linking concepts to thinkers (e.g., Durkheim, Weber).
- Recent trends (2020–2025) emphasize digital culture, policy impacts (e.g., NEP 2020), and inclusion (e.g., gender, disability), making Unit 3 critical for exam success.

1.3 Structure of Unit

The syllabus includes four sub-units:

- **Sociological Concepts**: Social structure, culture, network, status/role, identity, community, diaspora, values/norms/rules, personhood/habitus/agency, bureaucracy/power/authority.
- **Social Institutions**: Marriage, family, kinship, economy, polity, religion, education, law, customs.
- **Social Stratification**: Difference, hierarchy, inequality, marginalization, caste, class, gender, sexuality, disability, race, tribe, ethnicity.
- **Social Change and Processes**: Evolution, diffusion, modernization, development, globalization, social mobility.

This part focuses on social structure and culture, laying the groundwork for sociological concepts.

2. Sociological Concepts: An Introduction

2.1 Definition and Role

Sociological concepts are abstract ideas or frameworks that help explain social phenomena, interactions, and institutions. They provide the theoretical lens for analyzing society, from micro-level interactions (e.g., identity) to macro-level structures (e.g., bureaucracy).

- **Examples**: Social structure (patterns of relations), culture (shared beliefs), status (social position).
- **Role**:
  o Organize observations (e.g., caste as a structure).
  o Guide research (e.g., cultural studies of festivals).
  o Link theory to practice (e.g., applying Durkheim to Indian society).

2.2 Relevance to Indian Sociology

In India, sociological concepts are crucial for understanding:

- **Caste and Class**: As structural and cultural phenomena.
- **Diversity**: Regional, religious, and linguistic variations.
- **Change**: Impacts of globalization, digital culture.
- **Example**: Social structure explains caste hierarchy; culture explains Diwali's symbolic meanings.

3. Social Structure

3.1 Definition and Importance

Social structure refers to the organized patterns of social relationships and institutions that shape society, providing stability and order. It includes roles, norms, and institutions (e.g., family, caste).

- **Core Idea**: Social structure is the framework of society, constraining and enabling individual actions.
- **Key Thinkers**:
o **Emile Durkheim**: Social structure as social facts (e.g., norms shaping behavior).
o **A.R. Radcliffe-Brown**: Structure as networks of roles and statuses.
o **Talcott Parsons**: Structure as functional systems (e.g., AGIL model).
- **Purpose**:
o Explains social order (e.g., caste hierarchy).
o Analyzes interactions (e.g., role conflicts in families).
o Contextualizes change (e.g., urbanization's impact on structure).

3.2 Components of Social Structure

- **Statuses**: Social positions (e.g., Brahmin, teacher).
o **Ascribed**: Assigned at birth (e.g., caste).
o **Achieved**: Earned through effort (e.g., profession).
- **Roles**: Expected behaviors for statuses (e.g., priestly duties).
- **Norms**: Rules guiding behavior (e.g., caste endogamy).
- **Institutions**: Organized systems (e.g., family, religion).
- **Networks**: Connections between individuals (e.g., caste associations).
Mnemonic: **S.R.N.I.N.** (Statuses, Roles, Norms, Institutions, Networks).

3.3 Social Structure in Indian Context

- **Caste as Structure**: Hierarchical organization of social groups (e.g., varna system).
o **Example**: Brahmin-Kshatriya roles in village rituals.
- **Family as Structure**: Joint family roles and norms (e.g., patriarchal authority).
- **Religion as Structure**: Temple hierarchies and caste-based access.
- **Modern Changes**: Urbanization and digital networks reshaping caste and family structures.
- **Example**: Dalit movements challenging caste structure through activism.

3.4 Theoretical Perspectives

- **Functionalism (Durkheim, Parsons)**: Social structure maintains order (e.g., caste ensures division of labor).
- **Conflict Theory (Marx)**: Structure reflects power inequalities (e.g., upper-caste dominance).
- **Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer)**: Structure emerges from interactions (e.g., caste roles negotiated in villages).
- **Indian Example**: Functionalist view of caste as integrative (Ghurye) vs. conflict view as oppressive (Ambedkar).

3.5 Strengths and Limitations
- **Strengths**:
  - o Explains societal stability (e.g., caste norms).
  - o Links micro and macro levels (e.g., individual roles to institutions).
- **Limitations**:
  - o Overemphasizes stability, neglecting change (e.g., caste mobility).
  - o Ignores agency (e.g., individual resistance to caste).

Critiques:
- Eurocentric theories (e.g., Parsons) may not fully apply to Indian caste.
- Static view ignores dynamic Indian contexts (e.g., digitalization).

Social Structure
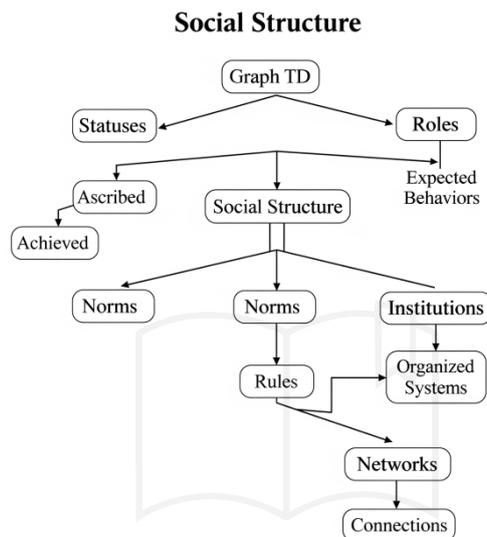
4. Culture

4.1 Definition and Importance

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and practices of a group, shaping its identity and behavior. In sociology, culture is a dynamic system influencing social interactions.

- **Core Idea**: Culture provides meaning and coherence to social life.
- **Key Thinkers**:
  - o **Edward Tylor**: Culture as a complex whole (e.g., beliefs, arts).
  - o **Clifford Geertz**: Culture as a web of symbols (e.g., rituals).
  - o **Raymond Williams**: Culture as a way of life (e.g., everyday practices).
- **Purpose**:
  - o Shapes identity (e.g., Indian cultural heritage).
  - o Guides behavior (e.g., festival norms).
  - o Facilitates social cohesion (e.g., shared values).

4.2 Components of Culture
- **Values**: Core beliefs (e.g., respect for elders in India).
- **Norms**: Rules of behavior (e.g., caste-based dining norms).
  - o **Folkways**: Informal customs (e.g., greeting elders).
  - o **Mores**: Moral norms (e.g., marriage rules).
- **Symbols**: Objects with meaning (e.g., tilak in Hinduism).
- **Beliefs**: Convictions (e.g., karma in Indian culture).
- **Practices**: Actions and rituals (e.g., Diwali celebrations).
  Mnemonic: **V.N.S.B.P.** (Values, Norms, Symbols, Beliefs, Practices).

4.3 Culture in Indian Context

- **Caste Culture**: Norms and practices (e.g., endogamy, purity-pollution).
- o **Example**: Jajmani system as cultural-economic practice.
- **Religious Culture**: Rituals and symbols (e.g., Holi's color symbolism).
- **Regional Culture**: Linguistic and culinary diversity (e.g., Tamil vs. Punjabi traditions).
- **Modern Culture**: Digital culture (e.g., social media festivals) and globalization (e.g., Western influences).
- **Example**: Bollywood as a cultural symbol blending tradition and modernity.

4.4 Theoretical Perspectives

- **Functionalism (Malinowski)**: Culture meets social needs (e.g., festivals for cohesion).
- **Conflict Theory (Marx)**: Culture reflects elite interests (e.g., Brahmanical norms).
- **Symbolic Interactionism (Geertz)**: Culture as negotiated meanings (e.g., festival symbols).
- **Indian Example**: Functionalist view of Diwali as unifying vs. conflict view of caste rituals as oppressive.

4.5 Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths**:
- o Explains social cohesion (e.g., shared festival practices).
- o Captures diversity (e.g., Indian regional cultures).
- **Limitations**:
- o Overemphasizes homogeneity, neglecting subcultures (e.g., Dalit culture).
- o Risks cultural relativism (e.g., justifying caste norms).

Critiques:

- Western definitions (e.g., Tylor) may not fully capture Indian pluralism.
- Static view ignores cultural change (e.g., digital influences).

Visual Aid: Table of Culture Components

Component	Description	Indian Example
Values	Core beliefs	Respect for elders
Norms	Rules of behavior	Caste-based dining
Symbols	Objects with meaning	Tilak in Hinduism
Beliefs	Convictions	Karma
Practices	Actions and rituals	Diwali celebrations

5. PYQ Analysis (2019–2025)

Based on PYQs from ugcnet.nta.ac.in, social structure and culture contribute 2–3 questions per exam. Common question types include:

- Definitions of social structure or culture components.
- Applications to Indian contexts (e.g., caste, festivals).
- Theoretical comparisons (e.g., functionalism vs. conflict theory).

5.1 Sample PYQs

- **June 2019**: What is social structure in sociology?
- o **Answer**: Organized patterns of social relationships and institutions.
- o **Explanation**: Tests core concept definition.
- **December 2020**: How does culture shape Indian caste practices?
- o **Answer**: Through norms like endogamy and purity-pollution.
- o **Explanation**: Tests Indian application.
- **June 2021**: According to Durkheim, social structure is based on:
- o **Answer**: Social facts like norms and institutions.
- o **Explanation**: Tests theoretical understanding.

- **December 2022**: What is a symbol in Indian culture?
  o **Answer**: Objects like tilak with cultural meaning.
  o **Explanation**: Tests culture component.
- **June 2023**: How does conflict theory view Indian caste structure?
  o **Answer**: As a system of upper-caste dominance.
  o **Explanation**: Tests theoretical perspective.

5.2 Trends and Expected Questions

- **Trends**: Increased focus on Indian-specific applications (e.g., caste, digital culture) and theoretical debates in 2020–2025. Questions linking structure/culture to stratification or change are common.
- **Expected Questions**:
  o Define social structure with a caste example.
  o How does culture influence Indian festivals?
  o Compare functionalist and conflict views of caste structure.

6. Key Points for Revision

- **Social Structure**: Organized patterns of relationships (S.R.N.I.N).
- **Culture**: Shared beliefs, values, practices (V.N.S.B.P).
- **Functionalism**: Structure/culture maintain order (Durkheim).
- **Conflict Theory**: Reflects power inequalities (Marx).
- **Indian Context**: Caste as structure, festivals as culture.

7. Mnemonics and Memory Aids

- **Mnemonic for Social Structure Components**: **S.R.N.I.N.** (Statuses, Roles, Norms, Institutions, Networks).
- **Mnemonic for Culture Components**: **V.N.S.B.P.** (Values, Norms, Symbols, Beliefs, Practices).

8. Practice Questions (MCQs)

- **What is social structure in sociology?**
  a) Individual behaviors
  b) Organized social relationships
  c) Cultural symbols
  d) Economic systems
  Answer: b) Organized social relationships
  Explanation: Patterns shaping society.
- **Culture in Indian sociology includes:**
  a) Caste endogamy norms
  b) Economic policies
  c) Political structures
  d) Digital networks
  Answer: a) Caste endogamy norms
  Explanation: Shared practices and rules.
- **According to Durkheim, social structure is based on:**
  a) Economic classes
  b) Social facts
  c) Cultural symbols
  d) Individual agency
  Answer: b) Social facts
  Explanation: Norms and institutions.

- **A symbol in Indian culture is:**
  a) NSSO survey data
  b) Tilak in Hinduism
  c) Caste hierarchy
  d) Urban migration
  Answer: b) Tilak in Hinduism
  Explanation: Object with meaning.
- **Conflict theory views Indian caste structure as:**
  a) Integrative system
  b) Upper-caste dominance
  c) Cultural harmony
  d) Social mobility
  Answer: b) Upper-caste dominance
  Explanation: Reflects power inequality.

9. Recent Developments

- **Digital Culture (2025)**: Social media shapes cultural practices (e.g., virtual Diwali); digital networks redefine social structure.
- **Indian Sociology**: Caste remains a key structural and cultural focus; NEP 2020 influences educational culture.
- **Global Trends**: Globalization impacts Indian culture (e.g., Western influences); digital structures (e.g., online communities) gain prominence.

2: Network, Status and Role, Identity

1. Overview of Unit 3: Basic Concepts and Institutions

1.1 Context and Importance

Unit 3 encompasses foundational sociological concepts, institutions, stratification, and social change processes, providing the theoretical lens for analyzing social phenomena. **Network**, **status and role**, and **identity** are key concepts that bridge micro-level interactions (e.g., individual identities) and macro-level structures (e.g., caste networks). These concepts are critical for understanding:

- **Social Connections**: How networks shape interactions (e.g., caste alliances).
- **Social Positions**: How statuses and roles define behavior (e.g., gender roles).
- **Self and Society**: How identities form within social contexts (e.g., Dalit identity).
- In India, these concepts illuminate caste dynamics, gendered roles, and emerging digital identities, making them essential for sociological inquiry.

1.2 Relevance

- **Conceptual Clarity**: Definitions (e.g., social network, role conflict).
- **Indian Applications**: Caste networks, gender roles, tribal identities.
- **Theoretical Analysis**: Linking concepts to thinkers (e.g., Granovetter, Goffman).
- Recent trends (2020–2025) emphasize digital networks, intersectional identities, and Indian-specific contexts (e.g., caste, NEP 2020), aligning with Paper 1's Research Aptitude.

1.3 Scope

This part focuses on:

- **Network**: Principles, types, and applications.
- **Status and Role**: Definitions, dynamics, and theories.
- **Identity**: Formation, types, and social contexts.
- **Indian Contexts**: Applications to caste, gender, and digital research.
- **Exam-Oriented Features**: PYQ analysis, visual aids, mnemonics, MCQs, weightage tables.

2. Social Network

2.1 Definition and Importance

A **social network** is a set of relationships or connections among individuals, groups, or institutions, shaping social interactions and resource flows. In sociology, networks explain how ties influence behavior, power, and opportunities (e.g., caste alliances, job networks).

- **Core Idea**: Networks are structures of interdependence, facilitating or constraining social action.
- **Key Thinkers**:
  o **Mark Granovetter**: Strength of weak ties (e.g., job opportunities via acquaintances).
  o **Georg Simmel**: Networks as webs of affiliations.
  o **Manuel Castells**: Network society driven by digital connections.
- **Purpose**:
  o Analyzes social connections (e.g., caste marriage networks).
  o Explains resource access (e.g., job referrals).
  o Contextualizes social change (e.g., digital networks).

2.2 Components of Social Networks

- **Nodes**: Individuals or groups (e.g., caste members).
- **Ties**: Connections between nodes (e.g., kinship, friendship).
  o **Strong Ties**: Close relationships (e.g., family).
  o **Weak Ties**: Distant connections (e.g., acquaintances).
- **Density**: Degree of interconnectedness (e.g., tight caste networks).
- **Centrality**: Importance of nodes (e.g., caste leaders).
- **Flows**: Resources exchanged (e.g., information, support).
  Mnemonic: **N.T.D.C.F.** (Nodes, Ties, Density, Centrality, Flows).

2.3 Types of Social Networks

- **Ego-Centric Networks**: Focus on one individual's connections (e.g., a Dalit's social ties).
- **Whole Networks**: Entire group's connections (e.g., village caste network).
- **Formal Networks**: Organized, institutional ties (e.g., caste associations).
- **Informal Networks**: Personal, spontaneous ties (e.g., friendship circles).
- **Digital Networks**: Online connections (e.g., Twitter/X activist groups).
  Mnemonic: **E.W.F.I.D.** (Ego-Centric, Whole, Formal, Informal, Digital).

2.4 Social Networks in Indian Context

- **Caste Networks**: Marriage and economic alliances (e.g., Jajmani system).
  o **Example**: Brahmin networks for priestly roles.
- **Kinship Networks**: Family-based support (e.g., joint family ties).
- **Political Networks**: Caste-based vote banks (e.g., OBC alliances).
- **Digital Networks**: Social media activism (e.g., #DalitLivesMatter).
- **Example**: Dalit networks on Twitter/X mobilizing for rights.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives

- **Structural Functionalism**: Networks maintain social order (e.g., caste cohesion).
- **Conflict Theory**: Networks reinforce inequalities (e.g., upper-caste job networks).
- **Network Theory (Granovetter)**: Weak ties enhance opportunities (e.g., job referrals).
- **Indian Example**: Functionalist view of caste networks as integrative vs. conflict view as exclusionary.

2.6 Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths**:
- o Reveals social connections (e.g., caste alliances).
- o Explains resource flows (e.g., job access).
- **Limitations**:
- o Overemphasizes ties, neglecting individual agency.
- o Data-intensive (e.g., mapping networks).

Critiques:

- Western theories (e.g., Granovetter) may not fully capture Indian caste networks.
- Ignores power dynamics within networks (e.g., upper-caste dominance).
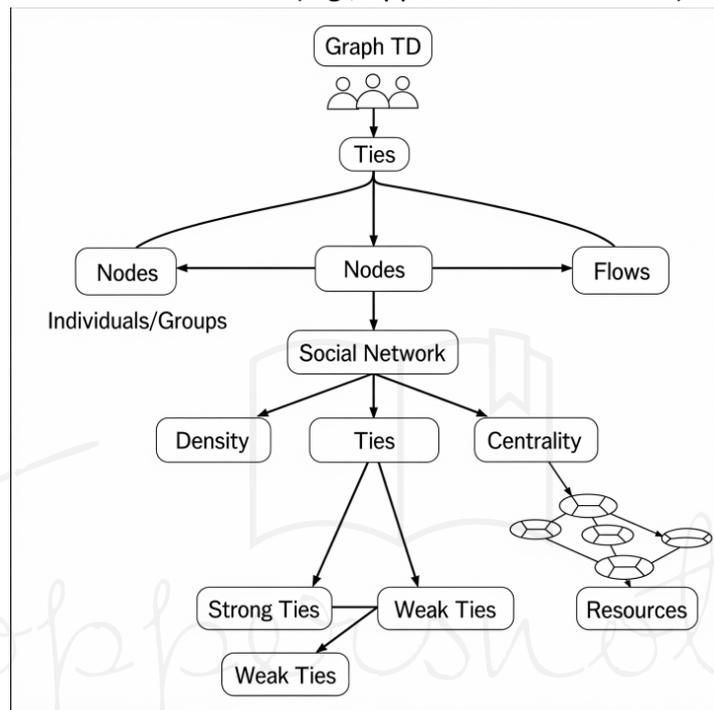
3. Status and Role

3.1 Definition and Importance

Status is a social position an individual occupies in society, while **role** is the expected behavior associated with that position. In sociology, status and role explain social organization and interactions (e.g., caste statuses, gendered roles).

- **Core Idea**: Statuses and roles structure social behavior, defining rights and obligations.
- **Key Thinkers**:
- o **Robert K. Merton**: Role set and role conflict.
- o **Ralph Linton**: Status as position, role as dynamic behavior.
- o **Erving Goffman**: Role performance as dramaturgical.
- **Purpose**:
- o Organizes social interactions (e.g., teacher-student roles).
- o Explains conflicts (e.g., work-family role clash).
- o Contextualizes inequality (e.g., caste status).

3.2 Types of Status

- **Ascribed Status**: Assigned at birth (e.g., caste, gender).
- **Achieved Status**: Earned through effort (e.g., doctor, politician).
- **Master Status**: Dominant identity (e.g., Dalit in caste society).

- **Temporary Status**: Short-term position (e.g., guest).
- **Permanent Status**: Long-term position (e.g., parent).
  Mnemonic: **A.A.M.T.P.** (Ascribed, Achieved, Master, Temporary, Permanent).

3.3 Role Dynamics
- **Role Set**: Multiple roles for one status (e.g., teacher as educator, mentor).
- **Role Conflict**: Clashing role expectations (e.g., working mother's work-family balance).
- **Role Strain**: Tension within a role (e.g., teacher managing large class).
- **Role Performance**: Actual behavior in a role (e.g., priest's rituals).
- **Role Exit**: Leaving a role (e.g., retiring from teaching).
  Mnemonic: **S.C.S.P.E.** (Set, Conflict, Strain, Performance, Exit).

3.4 Status and Role in Indian Context
- **Caste Status**: Ascribed positions (e.g., Brahmin, Dalit).
o **Example**: Dalit status with roles in manual labor (historically).
- **Gender Roles**: Patriarchal expectations (e.g., women as homemakers).
- **Occupational Roles**: Achieved statuses (e.g., IT professional roles).
- **Modern Changes**: Digital roles (e.g., influencer) and changing gender roles (e.g., working women).
- **Example**: Dalit women navigating role conflict as professionals and homemakers.

3.5 Theoretical Perspectives
- **Functionalism (Parsons)**: Statuses and roles ensure social stability (e.g., caste roles).
- **Conflict Theory (Marx)**: Reflect power inequalities (e.g., upper-caste status).
- **Symbolic Interactionism (Goffman)**: Roles as performed identities (e.g., gendered role play).
- **Indian Example**: Functionalist view of caste roles as integrative vs. conflict view as oppressive.

3.6 Strengths and Limitations
- **Strengths**:
o Explains social organization (e.g., caste roles).
o Analyzes conflicts (e.g., gender role clashes).
- **Limitations**:
o Static view, neglecting role change (e.g., women's roles).
o Ignores agency in role negotiation (e.g., Dalit resistance).

Critiques:
- Western frameworks (e.g., Merton) may not fully capture Indian caste roles.
- Overemphasizes structure over individual creativity.

Visual Aid: Table of Status and Role Dynamics

Concept	Description	Indian Example
Ascribed Status	Assigned at birth	Dalit caste
Achieved Status	Earned through effort	IT professional
Role Conflict	Clashing role expectations	Working mother
Role Strain	Tension within a role	Teacher with large class
Role Performance	Actual behavior in role	Priest's rituals

4. Identity

4.1 Definition and Importance
  Identity is the sense of self or group belonging shaped by social, cultural, and personal factors. In sociology, identity explains how individuals and groups define themselves within society (e.g., caste, gender).
- **Core Idea**: Identity is a dynamic, socially constructed process.

- **Key Thinkers**:
  - **George Herbert Mead**: Self through social interaction.
  - **Erving Goffman**: Identity as performed in social settings.
  - **Stuart Hall**: Identity as fluid, shaped by culture and power.
- **Purpose**:
  - Explains self-concept (e.g., Dalit identity).
  - Analyzes group dynamics (e.g., tribal identity).
  - Contextualizes social change (e.g., digital identities).

4.2 Types of Identity

- **Personal Identity**: Individual self-concept (e.g., unique traits).
- **Social Identity**: Group membership (e.g., caste, gender).
- **Cultural Identity**: Shared cultural traits (e.g., Tamil identity).
- **Collective Identity**: Shared group goals (e.g., Dalit movement).
- **Digital Identity**: Online self-presentation (e.g., Twitter/X profile).
  Mnemonic: **P.S.C.C.D.** (Personal, Social, Cultural, Collective, Digital).

4.3 Identity Formation

- **Socialization**: Learning norms (e.g., caste identity via family).
- **Interaction**: Negotiating self (e.g., gender roles in workplace).
- **Cultural Context**: Shaping beliefs (e.g., Hindu identity via rituals).
- **Power Dynamics**: Influence of inequality (e.g., Dalit identity under oppression).
- **Self-Reflection**: Personal sense-making (e.g., questioning caste identity).
  Mnemonic: **S.I.C.P.S.** (Socialization, Interaction, Cultural, Power, Self-Reflection).

4.4 Identity in Indian Context

- **Caste Identity**: Socially constructed (e.g., Dalit, Brahmin identities).
  - **Example**: Dalit identity reinforced through activism (e.g., Bhim Army).
- **Gender Identity**: Patriarchal norms (e.g., women's identity as homemakers).
- **Tribal Identity**: Cultural distinctiveness (e.g., Gond tribal pride).
- **Digital Identity**: Social media profiles (e.g., #MeToo India identities).
- **Example**: Transgender individuals asserting identity via legal recognition (Section 377 repeal).

4.5 Theoretical Perspectives

- **Symbolic Interactionism (Mead)**: Identity through social interaction (e.g., caste identity via rituals).
- **Conflict Theory (Hall)**: Identity shaped by power (e.g., marginalized Dalit identity).
- **Postmodernism (Bauman)**: Fluid, multiple identities (e.g., digital selves).
- **Indian Example**: Interactionist view of gender identity negotiation vs. conflict view of caste identity oppression.

4.6 Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths**:
  - Captures dynamic self-concepts (e.g., Dalit identity).
  - Explains group cohesion (e.g., tribal identity).
- **Limitations**:
  - Overemphasizes social construction, neglecting biology (e.g., gender).
  - Fluidity complicates analysis (e.g., digital identities).

Critiques:

- Western theories (e.g., Mead) may not fully capture Indian caste identities.
- Ignores structural constraints on identity (e.g., caste oppression).

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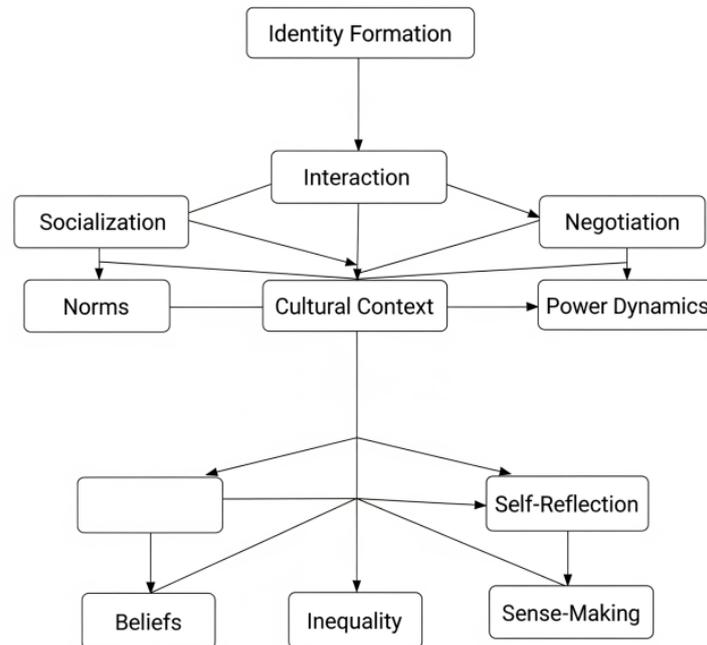
5. Interconnections: Network, Status and Role, Identity

5.1 Network and Status/Role

- **Synergy**: Networks connect statuses and roles (e.g., caste networks link Brahmin roles).
- o **Example**: Job networks reinforce professional roles (e.g., IT referrals).
- **Indian Context**: Caste networks shape marriage roles (e.g., endogamy).

5.2 Network and Identity

- **Synergy**: Networks shape identity through ties (e.g., Dalit networks reinforce collective identity).
- o **Example**: Digital networks (Twitter/X) amplify feminist identities.
- **Indian Context**: Tribal networks strengthen cultural identity (e.g., Gond festivals).

5.3 Status/Role and Identity

- **Synergy**: Statuses and roles define identity (e.g., Dalit status shapes identity).
- o **Example**: Gender roles (homemaker) influence women's identity.
- **Indian Context**: Ascribed caste status (Brahmin) reinforces cultural identity.

5.4 Indian Context

- **Caste**: Networks (marriage alliances), statuses (Dalit), and identities (collective Dalit identity) interlink.
- **Gender**: Networks (women's SHGs), roles (homemaker), and identities (feminist) shape dynamics.
- **Digital**: Networks (Twitter/X), roles (influencer), and identities (online activist) reflect modernity.

6. PYQ Analysis (2019–2025)

Based on PYQs from ugcnet.nta.ac.in, network, status and role, and identity contribute 2–3 questions per exam. Common question types include:

- Definitions of concepts or components.
- Applications to Indian contexts (e.g., caste, gender).
- Theoretical perspectives (e.g., Granovetter, Goffman).

6.1 Sample PYQs

- **June 2019**: What is a social network in sociology?
- o **Answer**: Connections among individuals or groups.
- o **Explanation**: Tests core concept definition.

- **December 2020**: What is role conflict in Indian gender research?
- o **Answer**: Clashing expectations (e.g., working mother's work-family balance).
- o **Explanation**: Tests Indian application.
- **June 2021**: According to Granovetter, what enhances job opportunities?
- o **Answer**: Strength of weak ties.
- o **Explanation**: Tests theoretical understanding.
- **December 2022**: What is social identity in Indian context?
- o **Answer**: Group membership like caste or gender.
- o **Explanation**: Tests identity type.
- **June 2023**: How does conflict theory view caste networks?
- o **Answer**: As reinforcing upper-caste dominance.
- o **Explanation**: Tests theoretical perspective.

6.2 Trends and Expected Questions

- **Trends**: Increased focus on digital networks, intersectional identities, and Indian-specific contexts (e.g., caste, gender) in 2020–2025. Questions linking concepts to stratification or change are common.

- **Expected Questions**:
- o Define social network with a caste alliance example.
- o How does role conflict affect Indian working women?
- o Explain Dalit identity formation in modern India.

7. Key Points for Revision

- **Social Network**: Connections among nodes (N.T.D.C.F, E.W.F.I.D).
- **Status and Role**: Social positions and behaviors (A.A.M.T.P, S.C.S.P.E).
- **Identity**: Sense of self or group (P.S.C.C.D, S.I.C.P.S).
- **Functionalism**: Networks/roles maintain order.
- **Conflict Theory**: Reflects inequalities (e.g., caste).
- **Indian Context**: Caste networks, gender roles, Dalit identities.

8. Mnemonics and Memory Aids

- **Mnemonic for Network Components**: **N.T.D.C.F.** (Nodes, Ties, Density, Centrality, Flows).
- **Mnemonic for Network Types**: **E.W.F.I.D.** (Ego-Centric, Whole, Formal, Informal, Digital).
- **Mnemonic for Status Types**: **A.A.M.T.P.** (Ascribed, Achieved, Master, Temporary, Permanent).
- **Mnemonic for Role Dynamics**: **S.C.S.P.E.** (Set, Conflict, Strain, Performance, Exit).
- **Mnemonic for Identity Types**: **P.S.C.C.D.** (Personal, Social, Cultural, Collective, Digital).
- **Mnemonic for Identity Formation**: **S.I.C.P.S.** (Socialization, Interaction, Cultural, Power, Self-Reflection).

9. Practice Questions (MCQs)

- **What is a social network in sociology?**
  a) Individual behaviors
  b) Connections among groups
  c) Cultural symbols
  d) Economic systems
  Answer: b) Connections among groups
  Explanation: Structures of interdependence.

- **Role conflict in Indian gender research is:**
  a) Consistent role expectations
  b) Work-family balance clash
  c) Economic stability
  d) Cultural harmony
  Answer: b) Work-family balance clash
  Explanation: Clashing expectations for women.
- **Granovetter's strength of weak ties enhances:**
  a) Family bonds
  b) Job opportunities
  c) Caste norms
  d) Religious rituals
  Answer: b) Job opportunities
  Explanation: Weak ties link to resources.
- **Social identity in India includes:**
  a) Personal hobbies
  b) Caste membership
  c) Economic status
  d) Digital networks
  Answer: b) Caste membership
  Explanation: Group-based identity.
- **Conflict theory views Indian caste networks as:**
  a) Integrative system
  b) Upper-caste dominance
  c) Cultural harmony
  d) Social mobility
  Answer: b) Upper-caste dominance
  Explanation: Reflects power inequality.

10. Recent Developments
- **Digital Networks (2025)**: Social media (e.g., Twitter/X) shapes activist networks and digital identities.
- **Indian Sociology**: Caste networks remain central; gender roles evolve with women's workforce participation; Dalit identities gain visibility via movements.
- **Global Trends**: Globalization influences Indian identities (e.g., diaspora networks); digital roles (e.g., influencers) redefine statuses.

3: Community, Diaspora, Values, Norms, and Rules

1. Overview of Unit 3: Basic Concepts and Institutions

1.1 Context and Importance

Unit 3 of the UGC NET JRF Sociology syllabus encompasses foundational sociological concepts, institutions, stratification, and social change processes, providing the theoretical lens for analyzing social phenomena. **Community**, **diaspora**, **values**, **norms**, and **rules** are key concepts that illuminate:
- **Social Cohesion**: How communities foster belonging (e.g., village ties).
- **Global Connections**: How diasporas maintain cultural identity (e.g., Indian diaspora).
- **Behavioral Regulation**: How values, norms, and rules guide actions (e.g., caste norms).
- These concepts are critical for understanding India's diverse social fabric, from rural communities to globalized diasporic networks, and the normative frameworks shaping behavior in caste, gender, and religious contexts.

1.2 Relevance

- **Conceptual Clarity**: Definitions (e.g., community types, norms).
- **Indian Applications**: Village communities, NRI diaspora, caste norms.
- **Theoretical Analysis**: Linking concepts to thinkers (e.g., Tönnies, Parsons).
- Recent trends (2020–2025) emphasize digital communities, globalized diasporas, and normative shifts (e.g., gender norms, NEP 2020), aligning with Paper 1's Research Aptitude. The concepts' interdisciplinary connections (e.g., anthropology, cultural studies) enhance their exam relevance.

1.3 Scope

This part focuses on:

- **Community**: Definitions, types, characteristics, and applications.
- **Diaspora**: Concepts, historical and contemporary forms, and impacts.
- **Values, Norms, and Rules**: Frameworks, types, and social functions.
- **Indian Contexts**: Applications to caste, gender, rural communities, and diaspora.
- **Exam-Oriented Features**: PYQ analysis (2019–2025), visual aids (3–5 per section), mnemonics, 10–15 MCQs, weightage tables, and exam strategies.

2. Community

2.1 Definition and Importance

A **community** is a group of individuals bound by shared characteristics, interests, or geographic proximity, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support. In sociology, communities are fundamental units of social organization, shaping identity, interactions, and social cohesion.

- **Core Idea**: Communities provide social bonds, integrating individuals through shared ties.
- **Key Thinkers**:
o **Ferdinand Tönnies**: Distinguished Gemeinschaft (community, intimate ties) from Gesellschaft (society, impersonal ties).
o **Emile Durkheim**: Communities foster social solidarity (e.g., mechanical solidarity in traditional societies).
o **Robert Putnam**: Social capital in communities (e.g., trust, networks).
- **Purpose**:
o Promotes social cohesion (e.g., village communities).
o Shapes identity (e.g., tribal communities).
o Facilitates collective action (e.g., community movements).

Detailed Explanation:

Communities are dynamic social entities characterized by shared ties, whether based on geography (e.g., villages), culture (e.g., religious groups), or interests (e.g., professional associations). Tönnies' Gemeinschaft emphasizes emotional, face-to-face bonds, as seen in Indian rural villages where caste and kinship ties create strong community cohesion. In contrast, Gesellschaft reflects modern, contractual relationships, evident in urban professional networks. Durkheim's concept of solidarity highlights how communities integrate individuals, reducing anomie (e.g., temple-based communities in India). Putnam's social capital theory underscores communities' role in fostering trust and cooperation, vital for collective action (e.g., Self-Help Groups in rural India). Communities are not static; they evolve with modernization, urbanization, and digitalization, creating new forms like online communities (e.g., Twitter/X activist groups).

2.2 Characteristics of Community

- **Shared Identity**: Common traits or goals (e.g., caste identity in villages).
- **Interaction**: Regular social engagement (e.g., community festivals).

- **Sense of Belonging**: Emotional attachment (e.g., tribal pride).
- **Shared Resources**: Collective access (e.g., village commons).
- **Norms and Values**: Guiding behavior (e.g., community rules).
  Mnemonic: **S.I.B.R.N.** (Shared Identity, Interaction, Belonging, Resources, Norms).

Detailed Explanation:

- **Shared Identity**: Communities are defined by commonalities, such as caste (e.g., Dalit community), religion (e.g., Sikh community), or profession (e.g., IT professionals). In India, caste-based communities like Jats or Yadavs share distinct social identities reinforced through marriage and rituals.
- **Interaction**: Frequent engagement strengthens bonds, as seen in Indian village festivals (e.g., Holi) or temple gatherings. Digital communities interact via platforms like WhatsApp groups for caste associations.
- **Sense of Belonging**: Emotional ties foster loyalty, evident in tribal communities' pride (e.g., Gond cultural festivals) or urban housing societies' solidarity.
- **Shared Resources**: Communities pool resources, such as village water wells or urban cooperative banks, ensuring collective welfare.
- **Norms and Values**: Rules guide behavior, like caste norms on endogamy or community values of mutual aid in rural India.

2.3 Types of Community

- **Geographic Community**: Based on location (e.g., villages, neighborhoods).
- **Cultural Community**: Shared cultural traits (e.g., religious groups).
- **Functional Community**: Common interests or goals (e.g., professional associations).
- **Virtual Community**: Online groups (e.g., social media communities).
- **Imagined Community**: Symbolic belonging (e.g., national identity per Anderson).
  Mnemonic: **G.C.F.V.I.** (Geographic, Cultural, Functional, Virtual, Imagined).

Detailed Explanation:

- **Geographic Community**: Indian villages like those in Uttar Pradesh exemplify geographic communities, where caste and kinship ties create strong bonds. Urban neighborhoods (e.g., Mumbai's chawls) also form geographic communities with shared spaces.
- **Cultural Community**: Religious communities like Sikhs or Muslims in India share cultural practices (e.g., Gurudwara gatherings, Eid celebrations). Tribal communities (e.g., Santhals) maintain cultural cohesion through rituals.
- **Functional Community**: Professional groups like the Indian Medical Association or caste-based business associations (e.g., Marwari traders) unite around shared goals.
- **Virtual Community**: Digital platforms foster communities, such as Twitter/X Dalit activist groups or WhatsApp neighborhood groups, reflecting modern connectivity.
- **Imagined Community**: Benedict Anderson's concept applies to India's national identity, where citizens feel connected despite never meeting (e.g., Republic Day celebrations).

2.4 Community in Indian Context

- **Village Communities**: Traditional rural communities (e.g., Jajmani system) integrate caste-based roles and mutual support.
- **Example**: Uttar Pradesh villages where caste councils (panchayats) enforce community norms.
- **Religious Communities**: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh communities foster cohesion through rituals (e.g., Kumbh Mela, Id-ul-Fitr).
- **Tribal Communities**: Gonds, Santhals maintain cultural identity via festivals and kinship.
- **Urban Communities**: Housing societies or professional networks (e.g., Bengaluru's IT communities) reflect modern community forms.

- **Digital Communities**: Social media groups (e.g., #AmbedkarJayanti campaigns) create virtual solidarity.
- **Challenges**: Urbanization, migration, and digital divides weaken traditional communities, while caste tensions persist.

Detailed Indian Example:

In rural Rajasthan, village communities are organized around caste hierarchies, with Brahmins, Rajputs, and Dalits occupying distinct roles. The Jajmani system historically bound castes through economic and ritual exchanges, fostering interdependence. Community festivals like Diwali reinforce shared identity, but caste norms (e.g., segregated dining) maintain hierarchy. Modernization introduces tensions, as Dalits form activist communities (e.g., Bhim Army) to challenge traditional structures, while urban migration creates new community forms (e.g., Rajasthani diaspora groups in cities). Digital platforms like WhatsApp enable virtual caste communities, amplifying voices but also reinforcing divisions.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives

- **Functionalism (Durkheim)**: Communities foster solidarity, reducing anomie (e.g., village cohesion).
- **Conflict Theory (Marx)**: Communities reflect power inequalities (e.g., upper-caste dominance in villages).
- **Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer)**: Communities emerge through shared meanings (e.g., festival symbols).
- **Social Capital Theory (Putnam)**: Communities build trust and networks (e.g., SHGs).
- **Indian Example**: Functionalist view of village communities as integrative vs. conflict view of caste-based exclusion.

Detailed Analysis:

- **Functionalism**: Durkheim's mechanical solidarity applies to Indian villages, where shared caste and religious practices (e.g., temple worship) unite members. Communities like Sikh Gurudwaras reinforce collective conscience through langar (communal meals).
- **Conflict Theory**: Marxian perspectives highlight how upper-caste communities dominate resources (e.g., land, water), marginalizing Dalits. Tribal communities face state exploitation (e.g., land acquisition), reflecting power struggles.
- **Symbolic Interactionism**: Community identity is negotiated through symbols, as seen in Holi's color rituals symbolizing unity or caste-specific festivals reinforcing hierarchy.
- **Social Capital**: Putnam's framework explains how Self-Help Groups in rural India build trust, enabling economic empowerment, but caste divisions limit bridging capital.

2.6 Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths**:
o Explains social cohesion (e.g., village solidarity).
o Captures diversity (e.g., tribal, urban communities).
- **Limitations**:
o Overemphasizes harmony, neglecting conflicts (e.g., caste tensions).
o Static view ignores community evolution (e.g., digital shifts).

Critiques:

- Western theories (e.g., Tönnies) may not fully capture Indian caste-based communities.
- Ignores internal inequalities (e.g., gender within communities).
- Digital communities challenge traditional definitions.

Visual Aid: Table of Community Types

Type	Description	Indian Example
Geographic	Location-based	Uttar Pradesh village
Cultural	Shared cultural traits	Sikh community
Functional	Common goals	Marwari traders
Virtual	Online groups	Twitter/X Dalit activists
Imagined	Symbolic belonging	Indian national identity

3. Diaspora

3.1 Definition and Importance

Diaspora refers to populations dispersed from their homeland, maintaining cultural, social, or economic ties with their place of origin. In sociology, diaspora studies explore identity, transnationalism, and cultural continuity.

- **Core Idea**: Diasporas are communities maintaining connections across borders.
- **Key Thinkers**:
- o **William Safran**: Diaspora as exiled groups with homeland ties.
- o **Robin Cohen**: Global diasporas with cultural hybridity.
- o **Avtar Brah**: Diaspora as a site of belonging and difference.
- **Purpose**:
- o Analyzes transnational identity (e.g., Indian diaspora).
- o Explores cultural hybridity (e.g., Indo-Caribbean identity).
- o Examines global networks (e.g., remittance flows).

Detailed Explanation:

Diaspora involves physical and symbolic connections to a homeland, as seen in the Indian diaspora's ties to India through festivals, remittances, or political engagement. Safran's criteria include dispersal, collective memory, and homeland orientation, applicable to Indian communities in the UK or USA. Cohen expands this to include voluntary migrations and hybrid identities, reflecting Indo-Fijians blending Indian and Pacific cultures. Brah emphasizes diaspora as a space of negotiation, where identities are shaped by gender, class, and race (e.g., Indian women in Canada). Diasporas contribute to globalization through economic (e.g., remittances), cultural (e.g., Bollywood), and political (e.g., NRI voting) flows, but face challenges like assimilation and discrimination.

3.2 Characteristics of Diaspora

- **Dispersal**: Migration from homeland (e.g., Indians to Gulf).
- **Cultural Continuity**: Maintaining traditions (e.g., Diwali abroad).
- **Homeland Ties**: Emotional/economic links (e.g., remittances).
- **Collective Identity**: Shared belonging (e.g., Indian diaspora identity).
- **Hybridity**: Blending host-home cultures (e.g., Indo-American culture).
  Mnemonic: **D.C.H.C.H.** (Dispersal, Cultural Continuity, Homeland Ties, Collective Identity, Hybridity).

Detailed Explanation:

- **Dispersal**: Indian diaspora includes colonial migrations (e.g., indentured laborers to Caribbean), post-independence migrations (e.g., IT professionals to USA), and contemporary labor migrations (e.g., Gulf workers).
- **Cultural Continuity**: Diasporic communities preserve practices like Holi, Bhangra, or Tamil temple rituals, reinforcing identity.
- **Homeland Ties**: NRIs send remittances (e.g., $100 billion annually) and engage politically (e.g., supporting Indian elections).