

Anthropology (CSS-2016)

(Q3)

Discuss major socio-cultural and psychological barriers to change. (20)

Introduction:

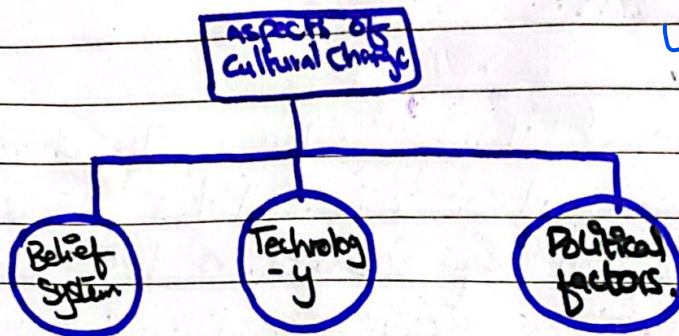
Sociocultural change refers to the change or transformation which takes place as a result of interaction between individuals or societies. Over the years, the sole reason for the transformation in our lives is due to the day-to-day interaction with people around us.

For instance, from our dressing sense to cultural values and cuisines, we see a drastic change in variety. However, there are a certain barriers which one has to face in wake of socio-cultural change. These obstacles can be cultural, political and even psychological. Thereby, the following detail will deal with the major socio-cultural and psychological barriers to change.

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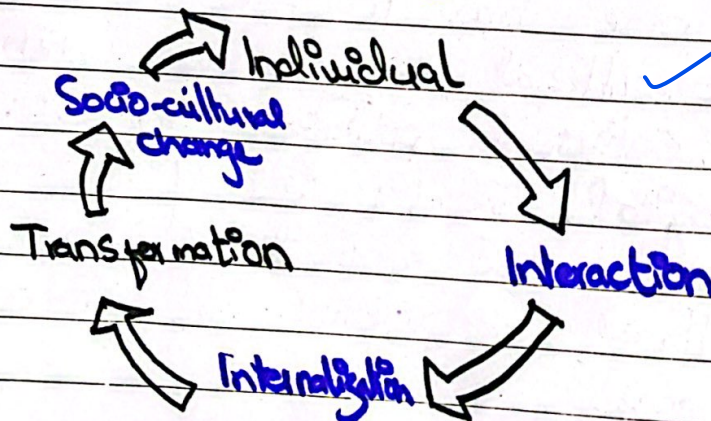
What is Socio-cultural change?

As explained earlier socio cultural change refers to the interaction between a society with another which changes their lifestyle, thought process and creates an amalgamation of cultures. Following are the aspects of cultural change:



A cycle of socio-cultural change:

In order to bring socio-cultural change, there is a cyclic pattern which is given out by anthropologists. Following is the cycle:

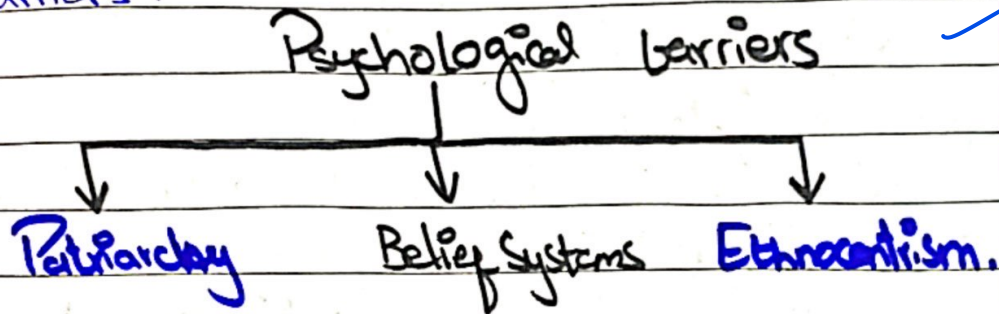


Barriers to Sociocultural Change:

1) Psychological Barriers:

Psychological barriers involve the **cultural and belief system** of people which prevents them from undergoing sociocultural change.

Following can be the psychological barriers:



- Patriarchy acts as a barrier to change:

Patriarchy, apart from being a cultural norm, is also a psychological barrier to change. Judith Butler in her book, "**Gender Troubles**" says that a patriarchal system hinders women from attaining dominant positions as men are considered the most superior. This **cultural psychological barrier** tends to prevent the interaction

between different cultures.

Belief System's role as a psychological barrier to change:

There are a certain belief systems around the world which act as a barrier to change. **Conrad Phillip Sokoloff**, in his book, "Cultural Anthropology" says that people tend to obsess with their belief system and there is some sort of **social control** which prevents people from accepting any change. For instance, the **Evangelical Christianity** does not allow women to take positions of **religious leadership** etc. and **father** as well.

Ethnocentrism: A barrier to change and cause of downfall:

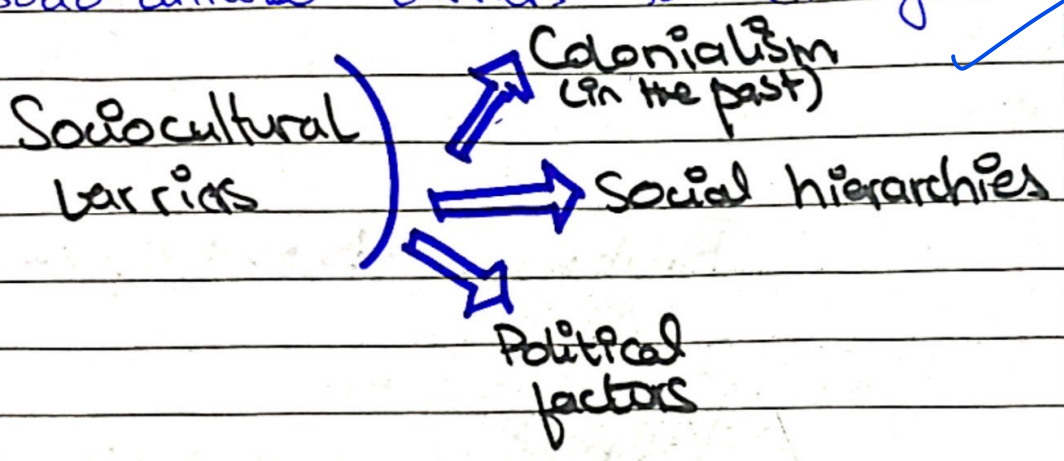
Ethnocentrism means the **biased attitude towards one's own culture**.

People believe that their culture and norms are superior of all and this acts as a psychological barrier for a society. For instance, most of the **Sub-Saharan Countries** still live in primitive societies due

to unacceptance of new cultures.

2) Sociocultural barriers to change:

There are a number of socio-cultural barriers which prevent change within a society. Scholars like Anthropologists like **Emile Durkheim** also believe that ~~soc~~ without any change, societies do not grow and due to their rigidity, they face losses in the future. Following can be the socio-cultural barriers to change:



- Colonialism:

Colonialism as also served as a socio-cultural barrier. According to **John Newman**, colonialists in **America** used to suppress **black slaves** as they were many in number and as a result, less cultural change took place in black societies and

they used to live under the control of their British owners.

- Social Hierarchies also act as a sociocultural barrier:

Sociocultural barriers also include social hierarchies. For instance, there are 4 hierarchies which still exist in the Indian culture.

The most influential and superior are the Brahmins and the least important are Shudras. Thereby, this hierarchy prevents any new change which could take Shudras out of Brahmin's subervience.

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Brahmins ⇒ Most superior



Vaishyas



Kshatriyas



Shudra ⇒ Most inferior

} Rest lie
in the middle

- Political factors thwart change within a society:

Political factors exhibit social control. According to Conrad Phillip Kottak, the political factors like autocracy tries to suppress rebellion by putting a halt to cultural mores like funeral, festivals, occasions etc. Today, Democratic Republic of North Korea is an example of sociocultural barriers. The country lives in isolation and thwarts any kind of western influence to seep through the country.

Conclusion:

Thus, psychological and socio-cultural barriers prevent change. The societies which exist today and are still primitive denotes that they did not accept external cultural influence regardless of how beneficial it could have been. Such barriers can be seen in developing countries as they have less resources and they are inclined towards their culture and honour more.