

Define and / differentiate social and cultural change. Discuss the impediments to change with reference to change in Pakistani society and culture.

Answer

1) Introduction:-

Social and cultural change are the two important dynamic aspects of every society. Social change is concerned with the structural changes in institutions, and relationship structures while cultural change is more related to the changes in intangible aspects of society including values, beliefs, norms and customs. The process of social and cultural change is not always smooth and comes with several hinderances. In the case of Pakistan, these impediments due to cultural lag, religious conservatism, poverty, illiteracy, tribal/feudal resistance and ethnic and sectarian rivalries.

2) Social Change: Definition

Social change refers to the alterations in social structure, institutions, relationships and behaviors over time.

"Social change is the transformation

of culture and social institutions
overtime" — Anthony Giddens

Example:-

The rise of women-led institutions and women-focused legislations in Pakistan (Protection of Women against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010) highlights a social change.

3) Cultural Change: Definition

Cultural change refers to changes in the values, beliefs, norms and customs within a society.

Cultural change is more closely related to the attitudinal change within a society.

Example:-

An example of cultural change is the changing attitudes of society about women participation in the economic realm. Today more women in Pakistan are allowed to get education and work outside of their homes.

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4) Differences between social and cultural change:-

Two forms of changes differ in the following aspects:-

a) Focus:-

✓ Social change focuses on individuals and groups in how they organise and interact. It also includes how they change social institutions overtime.

Cultural change focuses on ~~shared~~ knowledge, attitudes and ~~practices~~.

b) Interconnectedness

Cultural change often provides the ~~groundwork~~ for social change.

Example:-

Rise of technological solutions leads to changes in working patterns and their pace.

c) Main targets of change

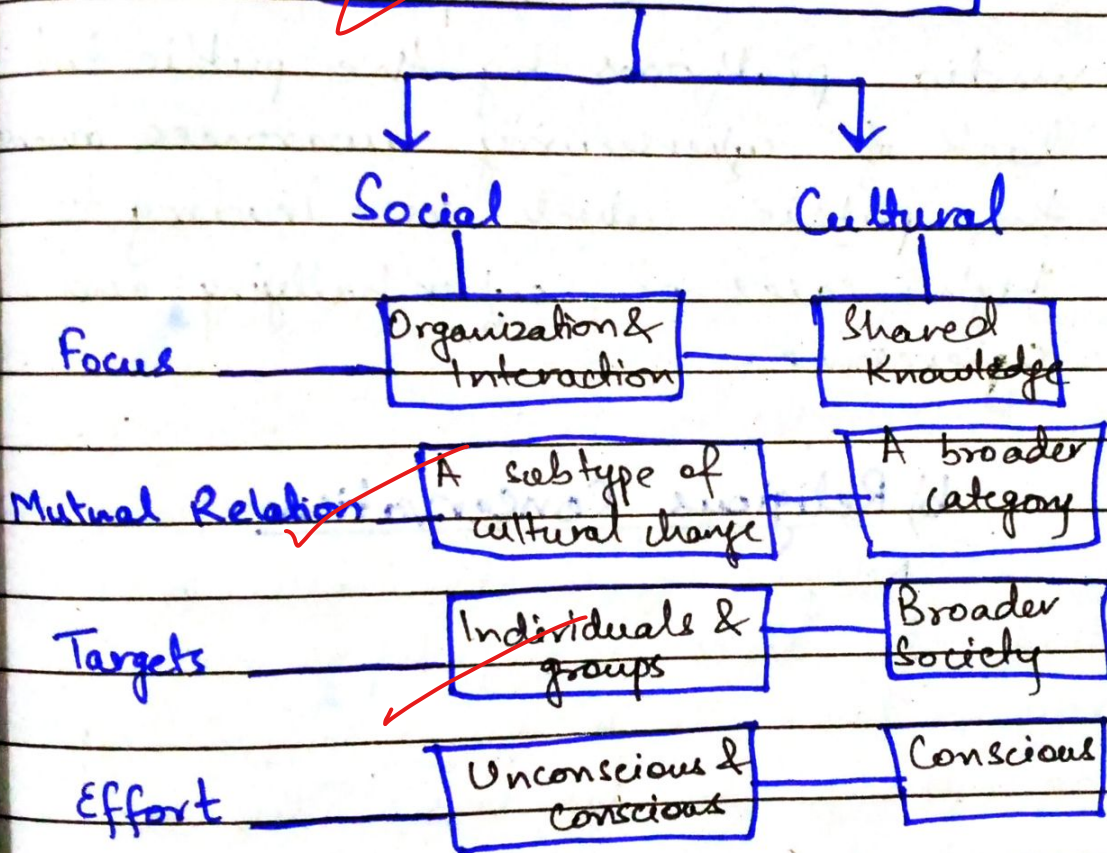
For social change, the ~~targets~~ of change are ~~institutions~~, interaction patterns and behaviors.

However, cultural change targets way of life, lifestyle and habit patterns.

d) Unconscious or Conscious Change

Social change occurs both via conscious and unconscious effort while cultural change only occurs via conscious effort.

Social vs. Cultural Change



5) Impediments of Pakistan w.r.t social and cultural change

When it comes to impediments to social and cultural change in Pakistan, we find a plethora of social, cultural, institutional, and attitudinal ones. Let's take a look

a) Cultural Lag

This is by far the biggest impediment. As explained by W.F. Ogburn, this is when one part of the culture changes at a fast pace and the other, related part lags behind.

Example:-

The adoption of social media platforms by the public but lack of cybersecurity awareness among the public which is leading to high cases of cyber bullying and cybercrime.

b) Religious Conservatism

Religious conservatism which leads to strict interpretation of religious laws is a major impediment to change in Pakistan. This is especially true when it comes to changes in women status and family structure.

Example:-

Resistance of religious scholars to family planning initiatives.

c) Feudal and Tribal Systems

In a bid to maintain their traditional authority, feudal and tribal leaders resist changes especially

when it comes to tech adoption,
education and livelihood changes

Example:-

Resistance of ~~feudal~~ lords to land reforms

d) Low Literacy & Awareness

Low literacy rate and poor awareness
is one of the biggest hurdle
to adoption of new tech and
eradication of wasteful customs

Example:- Persistence of child marriage in tribal
areas.

e) Poverty

An easy way to visualize this hurdle is
via Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

This theory explains that when people
are mainly concerned about their basic
needs, they hardly think about change.

f) Bureaucratic Inertia

Resistance on part of
government and civil servants is
another major impediment.

Example- Late adoption of
tools for e-governance.

g) Gender Inequality

According to Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is one of the biggest hurdle to social change in terms of women rights. This is true for Pakistani society where patriarchal dominance is still a defining factor of society.

h) Ethnic and Sectarian Divisions

Ethnic and sectarian divides detract the progress of national development.

Example:- Issues of resource division within and between provinces.

i) Media Manipulation and Misinformation

Media propaganda creates misgivings in the hearts of public and can create resistance to government's policies for change.

Example:-

Propaganda against unified curriculum.

c) Conclusion -

Social and cultural change are two distinct yet closely related aspects of society. Social change is not often welcome especially in societies like that of Pakistan. However, changes in attitudes, institutions and governance structures can lead to slow yet transformative social and cultural change.

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