

Human and Animal Society

Some of the difference between human society and animal society are as follows:

Human vs. Animal society:

Society not confined to man. Above we have described the concept and nature of society. Society, as should be clear from the above discussion, is the name given to social relationships by which every human being is interconnected with his fellow men.

But society is not limited to human beings alone. There are actually animal societies of varying degrees. It is not man only who wants to live in society and exhibit natural sociality but ants, termites, birds, monkeys, apes and countless other animals also are moved to live in society by the requirements of their nature.

Need of Society for Animals:

Sexual Instinct:

The first instinct that leads animals like human beings to form society is the instinct of perpetuation of their species. Sex instinct is equally prevalent among the animals. For the satisfaction of sexual instinct and reproductive urge animals need co-habitation.

Physical needs:

Secondly, animals need society for protection, comfort and nurture. The very birth of the animal child brings with it the absolute need of society itself. An animal baby like the human baby for his protection and upbringing depends on parents.

If the parents do not find out a comfortable abode for him the child may die of cold, heat or rains, if they do not bring food for him he may not survive. So just as food and home are provided for the newly born human child by his parents, similarly these are provided by the parents of the animal baby for his existence.

Culture irrelevant to animals:

Man depends upon society not only for food and protection but also for education, equipment, opportunity, content of his thoughts and aspirations. No doubt, many of our functions are animal like. We must eat and drink like animals; we spend much time in getting and preparing food.

But while we are like them, we also differ from them. It may be said that man is an animal but with a very large brain and the ability to talk. Animals, as they are devoid of any touch of civilization, do not need society for those purposes. It is man alone who is endowed with intelligence from which culture and language proceed.

Culture is the possession of man alone. It accounts for all of man's truly unique qualities and makes human what would otherwise be merely animal. For the development of culture and language man depends on society but since these are not the needs of the animal, he does not form society for these needs.

Difference between Human Society and Animal Society:

The difference between human society and animal society may be explained under two heads; (i) Biological and (ii) socio- cultural.

1. Biological Differences:

Although there are several biological similarities between the members of the animal society and human society yet there are several biological differences as well. These are:

i) Physical Structure of the Members:

The physical structure of the members of human society is more or less similar but we find many differences in the physical structure of the members of animal society. The physical structure of an elephant vastly differs from that of a lion.

Even the animals belonging to one type are not similar in their bodily structure, e.g. there is a difference between the cow of the plains and that of the hills. The animals do not use artificial methods to protect themselves against cold or heat on account of their bodily structure as the human beings need and use.

(ii) Mental Capacity:

It is evident that the mind of men is more / developed than the mind of animals. Although the animals are seen building fine nests and doing wonderful jobs, yet it has been established that the mind of even the cleverest animal is only one third in its cubic capacity than that of the man.

(iii) Capacity to Stand Straight:

Another biological difference between the animal society and human society is that the members of human society can stand straight on their legs and can use their hands freely. On the other hand, the animals cannot so stand and use the hands the way men use them.

(iv) Memory:

The capacity of memory also creates a difference between the animal and human society. Man can remember past facts and can thereby improve upon his past mistakes. He can find a solution to a complicated problem through mutual discussion. On the other hand, the animals are deprived of such capacity which makes their society structurally very different from the human society.

2. Socio-cultural Differences:

From the socio-cultural viewpoint, the human society differs from the animal society in the following respects:

(i) Human Society is a society of civilized and cultured beings:

It is obvious that animals also live in society for certain purposes. However, the human society differs from animal society both in degree and kind. The human society is a society of civilized and cultured beings.

It satisfies not only the physical but also the cultural needs of man. It is a higher stage of society in which men behave towards one another in ways determined by the laws of the land and are clearly conscious of the social awareness and social contact that exist among them as members of society.

On the other hand, an animal society is a society of beasts who are far removed from any degree of civilization or culture. The needs of animals are few and mostly physical which are met by inherited mechanisms. The needs of human society are met by cultural transmission.

(ii) Animal society is based on instincts:

Animal society is mainly based on instincts or reflex behaviour, whereas human society is based on reason or rational behaviour. There are no rights and duties in animal society. Every animal lives upon his physical powers whereas human society has a wonderful system of law and order.

(iii) Social Awareness:

The animals live in society but are not conscious of it. The degree of social awareness is extremely dim. They lack the ability to perceive logical relations between things and the power of integrating (not merely associating) various order of things through mental synthesis.

Of course, it may be said that bees show a remarkable degree of organization and therefore, intelligence in building their hexagonal cells for storing honey or that the birds evince a high degree of understanding in building their nest, singing their songs and protecting themselves against the huntsmen, yet nobody would grant to bees, birds or animals more intelligence than to man.

Their division of labour is not learned, it is based upon biological specialization. Their societies are the sole result of biological evolution, rather than social evolution. The way in which animals perform their work is quasi-mechanical and stereo-typed whereas the work of man, even if it is inferior, is done with forethought and understanding.

(iv) Mode of Organization:

The animal modes of organization are relatively fixed and rigid, whereas the human modes are flexible and adaptable. Man is not predisposed to live together as the bees and ants are. He is capable of developing complex modes of organization and changes them as the needs change. In human society we find institution of marriage to regulate the sex behaviour of men and women but in animal society marriage is non-existent.

(v) Absence of Symbolic Communication:

The animal society is a society of beings who lack intelligence, reason, culture and stay on the same level despite the advance of thousands of years. It is based upon instinct. Being incapable of symbolic communication, the animals are incapable of transmitting their culture to the next generation. Each generation of animals has to acquire the same knowledge and attitudes all over again through its own actual participation.

They cannot be told about anything until actually see it. They cannot be told without seeing a snake that snakes are dangerous. They cannot be told about gods, spirits and ghosts or about truth, patriotism and duty. Several investigators have tried without success to teach animals to speak.

An animal can learn to brush his teeth, to spit, to eat with a spoon, to go to bed and several other human activities but he cannot learn to speak. Animals do not possess the faculty of language. The absence of culture in animal society sharply separates it from human society which may be termed a "bio-socio- cultural" group.

As a biosocial system human society exhibits the same general traits as animal society but whereas in animal group the manifestation and modification of general traits occur primarily on a physiological basis, they occur in human society on a cultural basis. The foundations of human society are qualitatively different from those of animal society.

Darwin and his followers have tried to prove that there is no difference between man and higher animals in their mental faculties. After having examined many cases Darwin concluded that "the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind."

But the differences of degree become in time differences of kind. The speechless child cannot be distinguished from the unconscious child of the animal; but whereas the animal child can become at best the owner of a dim intelligence, the child may develop into a Newton or Napoleon. As R. A. Wilson says in refuting Darwin and his followers that these authors forget in their study what is more important, i.e., "the total or central unifying mental faculty of man, which is definitely superior to the central unifying mental faculty of animal."

The animals never develop "anything approximating to true language." Such germs of language as the animals possess remain but rudimentary; man alone has developed them into the wonderful outgrowth of speech. Were the animals to do the same, they would become men. The fact, therefore, remains that no animal has ever raised himself to the level of articulate speaking man."

Several investigators have tried without success to teach animals to speak. In one case one set of animals learn I “to brush their teeth, to spit, to eat with a spoon, to go to bed and a hundred other things,” but it could not learn to speak. In another case, the tongue of an orangutan was pressed back repeatedly with spatula for speaking the hard ‘d’ or ‘k’ sound but it could never enter her consciousness what it was all about.

These investigators properly concluded that animals do not possess the faculty of language in the proper sense of the word. Even the ape whose mouth parts are similar to men never tries to speak.