

SOCIAL PROCESSES: ASSOCIATIVE AND DISSOCIATIVE

Meaning of Social Process

Society is a system of social relations. Social relationships may be studied by the kind or mode of interaction they exhibit. These kinds or modes of interaction are called social processes. Social processes are the fundamental ways in which men interact and establish relationships.

Definition of Social Processes

1. **According to MacIver**, “social process is the manner in which the relations of the members of a group, once brought together, acquire a distinctive character”.
2. **According to Horton and Hunt opines** “the term social process refers to the “repetitive forms of behaviour which are commonly found in social life.”

TYPES OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

The major types of social processes are given below with a diagram under two broad headings.

A. Associative process: Cooperation, Accommodation, Assimilation

B. Dissociative process: Competition, Conflict

A. ASSOCIATIVE PROCESS

Associative processes are also called the integrative or conjunctive social processes which are essential for the integration and progress of the society.

1. Cooperation
2. Accommodation
3. Assimilation
4. **COOPERATION**

Meaning of Cooperation

Cooperation is one of the most basic, pervasive and continuous social processes. It is the very basis of social existence. The term “Cooperation” is derived from the two Latin words: “co” means

‘together’ and ‘operari’ meaning ‘to work’. Hence cooperation means working together or joint activity for the achievement of common goal or goals. So, it is a process in which individuals or groups work unitedly for the promotion of common goals or objectives. It is a goal oriented social process. It is very important as human society and its development have been possible with cooperation.

Definition of Cooperation

- i. **Merrill and Eldredge:** ‘cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more person work together to gain a common end.’
- ii. **A. W. Green:** ‘cooperation is the continuous and common Endeavour of two or more persons to perform a task or to reach a goal that is commonly cherished.’
- iii. **Fairchild:** ‘cooperation is the process by which the individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organized way for the attainment of common objective.’

Characteristics of Co-operation

Following are some of the important characteristics of co-operation:

- i. **Continuous Process:** It is a continuous process. There is continuity in the collective efforts in co-operation
- ii. **Personal Process:** This is a process in which the individuals and the groups personally meet and work together for a common objective.
- iii. **Conscious Process:** In the process of co-operation the organized individuals or the groups work together consciously.
- iv. **Universal Process:** Co-operation is also a universal social process. Because it is found everywhere in all periods of time.
- v. **Common Ends:** Common ends can be better achieved by co-operation which is essential for the welfare of both individuals and society.
- vi. **Organized Efforts:** Co-operation is a process of social interaction which is based on the organized efforts of individuals and groups.

Types of Cooperation

Different sociologists have classified co-operation in different ways. Some of the important types of co-operation are the following.

Maclver and Page have divided cooperation into two main types namely, Direct Cooperation and Indirect Cooperation.

i. **Direct cooperation:** In the process of cooperation when individuals and groups cooperate directly with each other, that is called direct cooperation. There exists a direct relationship among individuals and the groups. It permits the people to do things together because the nature of work itself calls for the participation of men or groups in a together situation. It brings social satisfaction. It makes the difficult tasks easy.

Examples of direct cooperation in societies

a. In rural communities the people co-operate in carrying the ill person to the doctor.

b. The people co-operate on marriage, birth, Eid's and other occasions of celebration.

c. In urban communities people of a political party co-operate with one another in general walks of social life.

d. In urban areas, the people of a religious sect co-operate with one another with special interest

ii. **Indirect cooperation:** In the process of cooperation when people do things individually and indirectly for the achievement of a common goal that is called indirect cooperation. Here the goal is one or common, but the individuals perform specialized functions for its attainment. This cooperation is based on the principles of division of labour and specializations of functions. So, in modern society indirect cooperation plays an important role as the present technological age requires specialization of skills and functions.

Examples of Indirect Cooperation

a. The owners of a mill and its workers co-operate with one another.

b. The businessmen and the customers co-operate on the selling rates of the products.

c. The exogamous system of marriage is a marriage between two families of different castes and Biradari (means a caste or sub-caste, e.g., Goldsmith, Blacksmith, Skinner etc.). This system is growing popular in urban social life.

d. The people living in urban communities co-operate in different acts of social life even if they belong to different professions, castes, classes, sects and political parties.

e. Co-operation among the people of different professions is a nice example of this type. In this way, they fulfill the needs of one another. This type of co-operation is indirect

Classifications of Cooperation given by A. W. Green are given below –

- i. **Primary cooperation:** In this type of cooperation there is an identity of interests but no self-interest among those who cooperate. Every member is conscious of the welfare of all. It owes its origin to personal satisfaction. It is present in primary groups like family, neighbourhood and children's play groups. Here there is an identity or ends of interest and all the members in some way or the other, derive benefit from primary cooperation.
- ii. **Secondary cooperation:** In these groups the individuals cooperate with each other for the achievement of some self-interest. This is the characteristic feature of modern civilized society which is very much witnessed in political, economic, religious, commercial, educational and other groups. It does not provide equal benefits to all its members.
- iii. **Tertiary cooperation:** Primary and secondary cooperation is the characteristic of an individual person while tertiary cooperation characterizes the interaction among various social groups, large or small. These groups make certain adjustments voluntarily with each other under certain compelling circumstances. The attitude of groups

cooperating with each other is selfish and opportunistic in the extreme.

For example, in an election when two political parties cooperate with each other to defeat the rival party, it is called tertiary cooperation.

Role and importance of cooperation:

Being a universal and continuous social process, cooperation plays a dominant role but it is very much essential for the welfare of the society as well. So, the role of cooperation may be discussed by two angles. They are –

- a. From an individual point of view.
- b. From the point of view of society.

Role of cooperation from individual point of view:

- i. Man can fulfil his basic and fundamental needs such as food, clothing and shelter by cooperation. It also fulfils many psychological needs of human beings.
- ii. It is not possible for individuals to reach their respective goals without the active cooperation of other members in society.
- iii. Cooperation is the foundation on which our social life is built up. The existence of society and the survival of human beings depend upon the cooperative spirit and mutual aid of men and women.
- iv. With the solid and active cooperation of his fellow beings, man can lead a happy and comfortable life.

Role of cooperation from the point of view of society:

- i. It helps society to progress. Progress can be better achieved through united action. Progress in science, technology, agriculture, industry, transport and communication etc. has been possible with cooperation.
- ii. It is the mainspring of collective life. It builds society, it conserves society. In a democratic country, cooperation has become a necessary condition of collective life and activities.

- iii. It provides solutions for many international problems and disputes. Because cooperation as a process of integration has the quality to bring end to different problems through united activities.
- iv. Progress is granted permanence only by cooperation. Because conflict inspires the individual to progress, but he does so not only if he gets cooperation.
- So, it may be concluded that cooperation is very indispensable for individuals as well as social life.

2. ACCOMMODATION

Meaning of Accommodation

It refers to understanding, adjustment or agreement. It is a process of getting along in spite of differences. Accommodation is one of the principal types of social processes. It is through this process that social order arises. **Park and Burgess** have said that human social organization is fundamentally the result of an accommodation of conflicting elements. Throughout his life man has to face a number of conflicting situations.

For example, the workers of an industry or a factory may go on strike today for some reason but they are bound to come back tomorrow after some settlement with the management. The husband and wife may quarrel for serious things at one time or another but most of the time they live together with mutual love and affection.

Definition of Accommodation

Some of the important definitions of accommodation are given below

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- i. **Maclver and Page** define that, “accommodation refers particularly to the process in which man attains a sense of harmony with his environment.”
- ii. According to **Ogburn and Nimkoff**, “Accommodation is a term used by the sociologists to describe the adjustment of hostile individuals or groups.”

- iii. According to **Gillin and Gillin**, “Accommodation is the process by which competing and conflicting individuals and groups adjust their relationship to each other in order to overcome the difficulties which arise in competition, contravention or conflict.”
- iv. According to **George A. Lundberg**, “Accommodation has been used to designate the adjustments which people in groups move to relieve the fatigue and tensions of competition and conflict.”
- v. In the opinion of **Biesanz**, “In one sense, accommodation is the basis of all formal social organization.”

It is evident from the above definition that it is the basis of all formal social organizations.

Characteristics of Accommodation

- i. **Universal Process:** It is found in all societies at all times in all fields of social life. Since no society can function smoothly in a state of perpetual conflict, accommodation becomes necessary.
- ii. **Continuous Process:** This process is not limited to any fixed social situation. It follows sooner or later as and when conflict takes place. The continuity of accommodation does not break at all.
- iii. **Both conscious and unconscious process:** Accommodation is a conscious process when the conflicting individuals or groups make efforts consciously to get accommodated to situations but accommodation is mainly an unconscious activity.
- iv. **End-result of conflict:** The hostile individuals or groups realize the importance of accommodation only after they get involved in some kind of conflict. If there is no conflict, there can be no question of accommodation.
- v. **It is a mixture of love and hatred:** According to **Ogburn and Nimkoff**, accommodation is the combination of love and hatred. Love leads to co-operation while hatred leads to conflict.

Forms or methods of accommodation

Accommodation takes place in different ways and accordingly assumes different forms. Some of the important forms or methods of accommodation are:

- i. **Yielding to coercion:** Most of the hostile individuals or groups yielding to physical or some kind of power exhibit the spirit of accommodation in order to end a conflict. *For example*, the weaker party submits to the stronger one out of fear and the stronger party can pressurize the weaker party by its superior strength. *For example*, an act of this kind happens after a war between two nations comes to an end.
- ii. **Compromise:** The conflict between the hostile individuals or groups having equal strength comes to an end through compromise in the process of accommodation. This is based on the principle of give and take. Here the involved parties have to make some sacrifices voluntarily for each other. So, it is a kind of voluntary accommodation. When the conflicting parties realize that the continuation of conflict would cause sheer waste of their time, energy and money, they automatically want a kind of accommodation which is called compromise.
- iii. **Tolerance:** Tolerance is a method of accommodation in which two or more contesting parties tolerate each other with sympathy and try to understand the viewpoint of others. They patiently bear the differences that exist between them. *For example*, the co-existence of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs etc. in Indian society is due to the method of tolerance. This is the best form of accommodation.
- iv. **Arbitration:** When the hostile individuals or groups have equal strength and are determined to stick to their view point, there is intervention of a third party, who acts as their arbitrator or mediator. The decisions of the arbitrator are binding on the parties concerned. *For example*, the conflict between the labour and management is resolved through the arbitration or arbitrator.

- v. **Conciliation:** This is another method of accommodation in which the third party only gives some suggestions in order to terminate a conflict. But the acceptance of these suggestions is not the binding force. It is up to the discretion of the contending parties.
- vi. **Conversion:** This form of accommodation involves a sudden rejection of one's beliefs, convictions and loyalties and the adoption of others. As a result of which the convincing party is likely to accept the viewpoints of the other party. In consequence, the party which has been convinced is quite likely to abandon its own ideas or beliefs or religion or claims in preference for the viewpoint of the other side with which it tries to identify itself. *For example*, ordinarily conversion is thought of only in connection with religion.
- vii. **Sublimation:** This is a method which involves the substitution of non-aggressive attitudes and activities for aggressive ones. In this method the conflicting groups give vent to their tendencies of aggression that is harmless to anyone else and also obviates conflict. *For example*, Mahatma Gandhi conquered violence and hatred by love and compassion.
- viii. **Rationalization:** In this method the contending parties try to justify their action on the basis of some imaginary ideas to avoid conflict. Hence, one blames others instead of accepting one's defects, one can retain self-respect. *For example*, sometimes the students believe that failure in the examinations is due to the defects in the valuation of answer scripts; they do not see the fact that their preparations for examinations are quite inadequate.

Accommodation is a significant integration social process. It is not only useful to the individuals or groups but also to the entire society.

- i. Society functions smoothly with accommodation. It checks conflict and maintains cooperation among the individuals and groups which is essential for social life.
- ii. It helps the individuals and groups to adjust themselves to changed functions and statutes which are brought about by changed conditions.

It helps them to carry on their life activities together even with conflicting interests.

iii. The realization of people that they should lead a happy and comfortable life has become possible only through accommodation.

iv. It is the very foundation of a social organization. Because it consists in the avoiding and delaying of conflict with disagreeable circumstances. The contending forces are adjusted to balance in this process. Hence, society maintains its balance.

Thus, accommodation is essential for social harmony. It is close to cooperation and conflict and thus must take trends on both fields into consideration.

3. ASSIMILATION

Meaning of Assimilation

Assimilation is one of the types of interaction. Like accommodation it is also a form of social adjustment. But it is more permanent than accommodation. Assimilation is concerned with the absorption and incorporation of the culture by another. It has reached this stage of assimilation only after accommodation. Assimilation makes the dissimilar individuals or groups similar because it is a process by which individuals or groups come to share the same sentiments and goals. Hence assimilation requires more fundamental changes than accommodation. *For example*, in India, the religious tolerance among the different religious groups is the most appropriate one as they have assimilated many points of each other's culture into their own and have made them integral part of their own social conduct.

Definition of Assimilation

Some of the following definitions given by eminent scholars are the following:

i. According to **Young and Mack**, "Assimilation is the fusion or blending of two previously distinct groups into one."

- ii. According to **Bogardus**, “assimilation is a process whereby attitudes of many persons are united and thus develop into a united group.”
- iii. According to **Biesanz and Biesanz**, “Assimilation is the social process whereby individuals or groups come to share the same sentiments and goals.”
- iv. **Hurton and Hunt** say that, “the process of mutual cultural diffusion through which persons and groups come to share a common culture is called assimilation.”
- v. **Ogburn and Nimkoff** define assimilation, “As the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar because similar, that is, because identified in their interest and outlook.”
- vi. In the words of **Park and Burgess**, “Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated into a common culture life.”

Characteristic of Assimilation

From the above definitions of assimilation, the following characteristics have been pointed out. They are:

- i. **Universal Process:** Assimilation as a process of integration is present in every society, all the time.
- ii. **Unconscious process:** Usually the individuals or groups involved in the process of assimilation are unconscious of what is taking place. Unconsciously one assimilates himself with others.
- iii. **Slow and gradual process:** The process of assimilation cannot take place suddenly. Rather it takes time. It depends upon the nature of contacts. If it is primary, assimilation is natural and rapid. If it is, secondary assimilation is slow.
- iv. **It is a two-way process:** It is based on the principle of give and take. When one cultural group is in contact with another, it borrows from its certain cultural elements and incorporates them into its own culture. So, it affects both.

v. **It is confined to multiple fields:** The process of assimilation is not confined to a single field but it is confined to multiple fields. In the religious field, *for example*, it may take place when an individual or a group of individuals of a particular religious background get converted into some other religious set or group.

Role and importance of assimilation

- i. In this integrative social process, the individuals or groups acquire the culture of another group in which they come to live by adopting its pattern of thinking, behaving, its attitudes and values.
- ii. As assimilation is a cultural and psychological process. It results in the promotion of cultural units.
- iii. It plays a very significant role in the development of human personality.
- iv. It brings similarity among dissimilar individuals or groups.
- v. It brings change in old culture, customs, traditions, folkways, mores, morals, law and religions etc.

Factors contributing towards assimilation or factors promoting assimilation

- i. **Toleration:** When the people of one culture tolerate the spread of another culture irrespective of their differences, tolerance takes place. Here, people of different cultures maintain balance by developing contacts, by participating in common social and cultural activities. So, toleration is an essential condition for promoting assimilation which is in turn helpful in unity and integrity of the community.
- ii. **Intimacy:** The development of close social relationships makes the process of assimilation natural and its degree become high. But when social relationships are not close and artificial, the process becomes slow. So, intimacy is another condition for assimilation.
- iii. **Cultural equality:** If there are striking similarities between the cultures, then there is no bar for assimilation to take place. When the degree of intimacy and toleration becomes high, it facilitates the growth of this process.

iv. **Equal economic standard:** Difference in economic standard hinders assimilation. But individuals or groups having equal economic standards can easily establish intimacy which in turn avoids jealousy, hatred and conflict. Here assimilation progresses.

v. **Amalgamation:** When individuals or groups come into close contact with one another, amalgamation takes place. *For example*, the matrimonial relationship between the Hindus and Non-Hindus facilitate the process of assimilation.

Factors hindering assimilation or harmful to assimilation

There are some factors which are harmful to the growth of assimilation or the factors which obstruct the process of assimilation.

These factors are explained below –

- i. **Isolation:** Individuals who live separately or feel isolated cannot establish good social relationships with others in the society. So due to lack of close or intimate relationship, the process of assimilation is hampered or even it does not take place.
- ii. **Cultural differences:** Differences in culture also hinder assimilation. The cultures having different religions, races, languages, customs, traditions do not have close relationships with each other. If assimilation takes place there, it is very difficult for its continuity.
- iii. **Differences in economic standard:** Difference in economic standard encourages the feeling of inferiority and superiority. There occurs the feeling of high and low. People with the feeling of superiority decline to establish social relations with those having a sense of inferiority. So, differences in economic standard stand as an obstruction in the process of assimilation.
- iv. **Physical differences:** Differences in physical characteristics like colour of the skin, growth of human body and other physiological features act as hindrances to assimilation. *For example*, the differences in the physical features of the black and white hinder assimilation among them.

v. **Domination and subordination:** Intimate social relation is very much essential for assimilation. But assimilation is absent or is hampered when one group dominates the other. It lacks social relationships.

B. DISSOCIATIVE PROCESSES

Dissociative social processes are also called the disintegrative or disjunctive social processes. These processes hinder the growth and development of society, their absence results in stagnation of society.

1. Competition
2. Conflict

1. COMPETITION

Meaning of Competition

Competition is the most fundamental form of social struggle. It is a natural result of the universal struggle for existence. It is based on the fact that all people can never satisfy all their desires. Competition takes place whenever there is an insufficient supply of things that human beings commonly desire. Whenever and wherever commodities which people want are available in a limited supply, there is competition.

Definition of Competition

There are many definitions of competition given by different scholars. Some of the important definitions are given below:

- i. **Park and Burgess:** “Competition is an interaction without social contact”.
- ii. **Biesanz:** “Competition is the striving of two or more persons for the same goal which is limited so that all cannot share.”
- iii. **Horton and Hunt:** “Competition is the struggle for possession of rewards which are limited in supply, goods, power, love – anything.”

iv. Competition may also be defined as “the process of seeking to monopolise a reward by surpassing all rivals.”

From the above definitions it may be concluded that competition is a process in which individuals or groups try to obtain things or things which have limited supply and which they cannot achieve or share collectively.

Features of Competition

Competition as disintegrative social process has the following characteristic features:

- i. **Universal Process:** It is the most universal social process present in all societies, whether civilized or uncivilized, rural or urban, traditional or modern in all periods of history and among all classes of people like doctors, engineers, workers, students and farmers etc.
- ii. **Continuous process:** Competition is a continuous process as it never comes to an end. If one process of competition ends then another process of competition stands there. The desire for status, power and wealth in an ever degree makes competition a continuous process.
- iii. **Unconscious process:** The individuals or the groups who are involved in the process of competition do not bother about themselves but they are primarily concerned with the achievement of goal or reward. Hence competition takes place on an unconscious level.
- iv. **Impersonal process:** Those who take part in competition do not know one another at all. They do not compete with each other on a personal level. They focus their attention on the goal or reward which they are trying to achieve. They do not have any contact whatsoever.
- v. **Always governed by norms:** Nowhere competition is unregulated. It is always and everywhere governed by norms. Competitors are expected to use fair means to achieve success.

Forms or types of Competition

Competition as a universal social process is found in all fields of social life. In our day to day life we come across many types or forms of competitions. Some of the important competitions are the following.

- i. **Political Competition:** This type of competition is found in the political field. *For example*, during elections each and every political party competes for getting majority. This is not only found at national level but at international level. Also, there is keen competition between nations who are wedded to different political ideologies.
- ii. **Social competition:** To get high social status usually this social competition is mostly observed in open societies where an individual's talent, capacity, ability as well as merit are given weightage.
- iii. **Economic Competition:** In the economic field economic competition is fairly observed. It is the most vigorous form of competition. It is reflected in the process of production, distribution and consumption of goods. In the economic field men compete for salaries, jobs and promotions etc. they generally compete for higher standard of living. This economic competition is not only present at individual level but also at group level.
- iv. **Cultural Competition:** Cultural competition is present among different cultures. When two or more cultures try to show their superiority over others, this type of competition takes place. *For example*, in modern society there is cultural competition between the Hindus and the Muslims. In the ancient period, there was a strong competition between the cultures of Aryans and Non-Aryans.
- v. **Racial competition:** Like cultural competition, racial competition is found among the major races of the world. When one race tries to establish its supremacy over other races, it gives birth to racial competition. *For example*, the competition between Negroes (Black) and the whites is the bright example of racial competition.

2. CONFLICT

Meaning of conflict

Conflict is an ever present process in human society. Whenever a person or persons or groups seek to gain reward not by surpassing

other competitors but preventing them from effective competition, conflict takes place.

In other words, it is a competition in its more hostile and personal forms. It is the process of seeking to obtain rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors. It is seen that conflict makes an individual or group try to frustrate the effort of another individual or group who are seeking the same object. It implies a struggle or fight among individuals or groups for a particular purpose or a number of purposes. *For example*, the movements like Civil Disobedience, Non-Cooperation and Satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi against the Britishers in India before Independence are in conflict. Even in today's society conflict is found in every sphere like caste, religion, language, culture and so on. Thus, it is considered as a universal social process.

Definition of Conflict

- i. **Kingsley Davis** defines conflict, "as a modified form of struggle."
- ii. **Maclver and Page** state that, "Social conflict included all activity in which men contend against one another for any objective."
- iii. **A. W. Green** says, "Conflict is the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others."
- iv. **Majumder** defines that, "Conflict is an opposition or struggle involving an emotional attitude of hostility as well as violent interference with autonomous choice."

From the above definitions, it is clear that individuals or groups involved in conflict try to oppose, resist or coerce each other deliberately. It is the opposite of cooperation. It is a process which leads two or more persons or groups to try to frustrate the attempts of their opponents to attain certain objectives.

Some of the examples which take us to different dimension are:

- a. The conflict between nations leads to national conflict.
- b. The conflict between different political parties leads to political conflict.

c. Caste conflict, class conflict and racial conflict etc.

Features of conflict

From the above definition the following characteristics may be noted.

- i. **Universal Process:** Conflict is found in all societies in all periods of time. The degree and the form of conflict may vary from society to society and from time to time but it is present in all types of societies.
- ii. **Conscious process:** This is a process in which the conflicting parties are very much conscious in causing loss or injury to persons or groups. They attempt to fight or oppose and defeat each other consciously.
- iii. **Personal process:** The chief aim of conflict is to cause harm or to bring loss to the opponents. The conflicting parties personally know each other. So in this form of struggle to overcome the opponents, the goal is temporarily relegated to a level of secondary importance.
- iv. **Intermittent process:** Conflict is not as continuous as competition. It is an intermittent process. It takes place suddenly and comes to an end quickly. It never continues for ever due to the occasional occurrence of conflict.
- v. **Conflict is based on violence:** Sometimes conflict takes the form of violence. Violence is harmful to the growth of the society and retards the process as it creates a number of problems. If conflict occurs non-violently, it maintains peace in the society which is helpful for its development.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT

According to Freud and some other psychologists, the innate instinct for aggression in man is the main cause of conflicts. Generally, it arises from a clash of interest within groups and societies and between groups and societies. The significant causes are:

- i. **Individual difference:** It is true that we, the human being, are not alike by nature, attributes, interests, personalities etc. These differences may lead to conflict among human beings.

- ii. **Cultural differences:** The culture of a group differs from the culture of the other group. The cultural differences among the groups sometimes cause tension and lead to conflict.
- iii. **Differences of opinion regarding interest:** In fact, the interests of different people or groups occasionally clash. *For example*, we can say that the interests of the employers and employees vary in many respects which may ultimately lead to conflict among them.
- iv. **Social change:** Social changes occur off and on in each and every society. Conflict is an expression of social disequilibrium. Social change is the cultural log which leads to conflict.

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Conflict may be of various types, like –

- i. **Overt and covert:** Overt conflict has some manifestation but covert conflict or latent conflict primarily remains invisible.
- ii. **Personal and corporate:** Personal conflict occurs within the group due to hostility, jealousy etc., on the other hand, corporate conflict occurs among the groups within a society or between two societies.
- iii. **Temporary and perpetual:** When conflicts occur among the individuals in the bus or in the shop or in the road are called temporary conflict, on the other hand when conflict occurs between two rival groups, then it is called perpetual conflict.

Conflict is not a continuous process. It may stretch for some time. In each and every conflict there is an intermittent period of peace and social harmony.

According to different scholars, they classify conflict differently.

a) Classification of Maclver and Page.

According to Maclver and Page there are mainly two types of conflict.

- i. **Direct conflict:** In this type of conflict, the conflicting individuals or groups try to harm each other directly to attain the goal or reward at the expense of their opponents even by going to the extent of injuring or destroying their rivals. Direct conflict may be of two types.

- a. **Less violent:** Sometimes direct takes less violent form. So, it is less harmful. *For example, litigation, propagandistic activities etc.*
- b. **More violent:** More violent forms of direct conflict is more harmful, *for example, war, riots, revolutions etc.*
 - ii. **Indirect conflict:** When the conflicting parties try to frustrate the efforts of their opponents indirectly it is called indirect conflict. The keen competition among the parties automatically takes the form of indirect conflict. *For example, when two manufacturers go on lowering the prices of their commodities till both of them are declared insolvent is indirect conflict.*

b) **Classification of Gillin and Gillin.**

Gillin and Gillin have given five types of conflict. They are:

- i. **Personal conflict:** It takes place on a personal level due to the selfish nature of man and the members of the same group when there is clash in their aims and ideas. *For example, the conflict between two qualified persons for a common post.*
- ii. **Racial Conflict:** It takes place among different races of the world. Some of the races feel superior to other races and some others feel inferior. So, the feeling of superiority and inferiority causes racial conflict. *For example, the conflict between Whites and Negroes (Black).*
- iii. **Political conflict:** It is found in the political field. When the different political leaders or the political parties try to gain power in democratic countries it is called political conflict.
- iv. **Class conflict:** It is present among the different classes of the society. Our modern society has been characterized by classes which are based on power, income, education etc. although class is an open system conflict takes place among different classes due to the difference in power, income, prestige etc. *For example, the conflict between the proletariat and bourgeoisie according to Karl Marx led to class struggle.*

v. **International Conflict:** It takes place between different nations. When the nations try to achieve a common objective by suppressing each other, international conflict takes place. *For example*, the conflict between India and Pakistan regarding the Kashmir issue.

c) **Classification of George Simmel.**

According to him there are four major forms of conflict. They are:

- i. **War:** It is a type of direct conflict. When all the efforts of the different nations fail to resolve the conflict, war takes place. This is the only solution to bring peace.
- ii. **Feud:** It is another type of conflict which takes place among the members of the society. So, it is also called intra-group conflict. It differs from society to society in degrees. It is also sometimes referred to as factional strife.
- iii. **Litigation:** It is judicial by nature. In order to redress grievances and to get justice people take the help of the judiciary which is called litigation. *For example*, for a piece of land when two farmers take the help of the judiciary. Litigation takes place.
- iv. **Conflict of Impersonal Ideals:** When the individuals do not aim at achieving personal gain but for some ideals it is called the conflict of impersonal ideals. Here every party tries to justify the truthfulness of its own ideals. *For example*, when a political party tries to show that its ideals are better than that of other political parties. This conflict takes place.

Importance of Conflict

Although conflict is a form of struggle or fight, it is essential both for the individuals and society. It performs both constructive as well as destructive functions. Conflict is constructive in the sense when it is helpful in the smooth running of the society. It is destructive when it hinders the peaceful atmosphere and retards the progress of the society.

The chief functions of conflict may be discussed under two broad headings. They are:

i. **Positive functions:** The positive functions are purely constructive in nature.

a. Conflict increases fellow feeling, brotherhood and social solidarity within groups and societies. *For example*, inter-group conflict promotes intra-group cooperation.

b. Conflict helps in the exchange of cultural elements when it comes to an end.

c. It changes the status of the group or society which comes to be regarded as a superpower.

d. When conflict is over, the parties give up old values and accept new ones. It brings changes in old customs, traditions, folkways and mores.

e. Sometimes conflict helps in increasing the production which adds to the national income.

ii. **Negative Function:** The negative functions are called the destructive functions. Some of the negative functions of conflict are given below.

a. In the process of conflict, the defeated party becomes psychologically and normally down.

b. Time, money and energy of the conflicting parties get exhausted.

c. Uncontrolled conflict brings violence which leads to destruction of lives and properties of countless individuals.

d. Social solidarity is adversely affected by conflict. It hinders national integration.

e. Sometimes conflict leads to inter-group tension and disrupts group unity.

f. Conflict diverts members attention from group objectives.

From the above discussion we come to know that conflict has both positive and negative importance. Its positive functions are more important than the negative ones. Moreover, conflict plays a very important role in consolidating a group internally.

Distinction between Cooperation and Competition

Cooperation is an associative or integrative social process and competition is a disintegrative or dissociative social process. Although these processes are universal, they differ from each other in the following points.

Co-operation:

1. Co-operation is a process of working together for common rewards.
2. The qualities like natural awareness, understanding, helpfulness and selfless attitude are necessary for cooperation.
3. Co-operation is limitless. Because one can go to any extent to help others.
4. Co-operation is always beneficial as it brings normally positive results.
5. Co-operation provides satisfaction and contentment to people.
6. The degree of solution for many international problems and disputes provided by co-operation is higher.

Competition:

1. Competition is a process in which individuals or groups struggle for some goal or end.
2. For competition self-confidence, strong aspirations, the spirit of adventure and readiness to suffer and to struggle are needed.
3. Competition has limitations as it is bound by norms.
4. Constructive competitions are always beneficial but uncontrolled competition is always harmful or dangerous.
5. Competition may cause satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction.
6. Competition may contribute to socio-economic progress as well as to general welfare but there is no chance for solution of international problems and disputes.

Distinction between Accommodation and Assimilation

The Learning Process from when we are born, what we learn, the order and way we learn it, is not as random and chaotic as it might seem but organized and follows, more or less, a clearly defined pattern. If you have watched young children develop you will know that most crawl or shuffle before they can walk and almost no one's first utterances are in complete sentences. While we are all proud when our child first points and utters the word "cat" to a four-legged feline nearby; we are even more pleased when he or she can distinguish between a cat and a dog, both of which have four legs, prominent ears, whiskers and a long tail. That is a sign of increasing discrimination on the child's part.

The most important differences between accommodation and assimilation are listed below:

Accommodation:

1. Accommodation is the natural result of conflict. It takes place just after conflict is over.
2. Accommodation takes place suddenly by bringing radical changes.
3. Accommodation is a conscious process. The individuals or the groups make efforts consciously for accommodation.
4. Accommodation may or may not be a permanent process because the conflicting parties do adjust on a temporary basis.
5. Accommodation takes place between conflicting parties.
6. Accommodation is based upon both love and hatred.
7. Accommodation is a process of social adjustment.

Assimilation:

1. Assimilation takes place only after accommodation.
2. Assimilation is a slow and gradual process.
3. Assimilation is an unconscious process. People of different cultures get assimilated unconsciously.
4. Assimilation is a permanent process as the individuals or groups assimilate with each other on a more or less permanent basis.

5. Assimilation is based upon friendly and cordial relationships.
6. Assimilation is both a cultural and psychological process.
7. Accommodation is a process of social adjustment.

Distinction between Competition and Conflict

Although competition and conflict are the disintegrative or dissociative social processes, we find differences in their nature, types and functions. So, these two social processes should not be confused with each other. The distinction between these two may be indicated in the following points.

Competition:

1. Competition is continuous. It can never end. So, it is called a never-ending social process.
2. Competition is an impersonal process. The competing individuals do not have personal contact what-so-ever.
3. Competition is an unconscious Process because the individuals or the groups are not aware of it. Their attention is mainly fixed on the object of competition. i.e. a reward or a prize.
4. Competition is a peaceful and non-violent process. There is absence of coercion or violence.
5. In competition all the competitors derive benefit from it.
6. Competition, when it becomes rigorous, results in conflict.
7. Competition and co-operation can go together simultaneously. Competition does not stand in the way of co-operation and vice-versa.
8. Competition encourages hard work.
9. Competition observes social laws.
10. Competition is productive.

Conflict:

1. Conflict lacks continuity. It is an intermittent social process. it takes place suddenly and comes to an end quickly. It is an ever-ending social process.

2. Conflict is a personal process. The conflicting parties know each other personally and try to defeat the opponent.
3. Conflict is a conscious process. Because the parties involved in conflict are aware of it and make deliberate efforts to reach the goal which takes place on a conscious level.
4. Conflict is generally a violent process as people engaged in conflict use violent methods.
5. In conflict people suffer heavy losses.
6. Competition, when personalized, leads to conflict.
7. It is conflict, which puts brakes on co-operation for a short period.
8. Conflict discourages efforts.
9. Conflict disregards social laws.
10. Conflict is non-productive.

In the end, it may be stated that conflict and competition are sometimes difficult to distinguish, both being forms of rival behaviour. However, the difference in focus, as explained above, of the opposing parties serves as a generally useful guide. When the attention of the competitors is shifted from the goal to the competitors themselves, competition becomes conflict.