3.3 INCIDENCE OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND RIOTS

Communalism culminates in communal violence and these riots have become a distinctive feature of communalism. The clash of two religious groups and their internal tension results in communal riots. While communalism breeds communal politics, riots are clear manifestation of communal tension. Communal riots are conjectural outcome of communal ideology. An event is identified as a communal riot if (a) there is violence and (b) two or more communally identified groups confront each other or members of the other group at some point during the violence.(Varshney,2002) Violence operates through what Brass calls *institutionalised riot systems* (Brass, 1997).This means riots are always intentional and organised by objectives in mind. Brass uses the term 'hegemonic' to explain the communal discourse that pervades Indian politics. This discourse, fiercely Hindu nationalistic, has been successful in corrupting history as well as memory. (Brass, 2003)

In this context Brass argues that riots are produced through a series of dramatic events which can be analysed through three stages: Preparation/ rehearsal, activation/enactment and explanation/interpretation.

Preparation or rehearsal is the initial stage of instigating a riot; for example, killing of a cow or kidnap of a Hindu girl. Activation or enactment of a large scale riot takes place under particular circumstances, most notably in cases of competitive political systems in a context of intense political mobilization or electoral competition in which riots are precipitated as a device to consolidate the support of ethnic, religious, or other culturally marked groups by emphasising the need for solidarity in face of the rival communal group. The third phase, explanation or interpretation follows after the violence in a broader struggle within, but also outside the local community to control the explanation or interpretation of the causes of violence (Brass, 1997).The third phase involves wider elements of society like journalists, politicians, social scientists, etc. In fact this phase and the struggle for explanation of riots that occurs during this phase is as important as production itself, as in any dramatic production.

Table 3.1 *Communal Incidents in India*

YEAR	NO.OF INCIDENTS	PERSONS KILLED	PERSONS INJURED
1954	84	34	512
1955	75	24	457
1956	82	35	575
1957	58	12	316
1958	40	7	369
1959	42	41	1344
1960	26	14	262
1961	92	108	593
1962	60	43	348
1963	61	26	489
1964	1070	1919	2053
1965	173	34	758
1966	144	45	467
1967	198	251	880
1968	346	133	1309
1969	519	673	2702
1970	521	298	1607
1971	321	103	1263
1972	240	69	1056
1973	242	72	1318
1974	248	87	1123
1975	205	33	890
1976	169	39	794
1977	188	36	1122
1978	230	110	1853
1979	304	261	2379
1980	421	372	2691
1981	319	196	2613
1982	470	238	3025
1983	500	1143	3652
1984	476	445	4836
1985	525	328	3665

Source: P.R.Rajgopal, Communal Violence in India (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1987 pp16-17)

The chronology of communal riots reveals that such riots are not caused spontaneously or due to any religious differences. In fact such riots are the results of political and economic interests. At the time of partition, it was a clash of political interests of elites of two different religious communities which resulted in communal violence. In 1960s and 1980s the involvement of local economic and political factors played a crucial role in the production of riots. Hyderabad riots in 1981,Meerut in 1982,Hazaribagh in 1983,Delhi and Bhiwandi in 1984, Ahmedabad in 1985, Meerut, Berhampur and Amritsar in 1986 and again Meerut in 1987 reveals that communalism and communal violence are being deeply embedded into Indian political scenario. The 1990s marked the changing political equations within the country. The killing of Australian missionary Sir Graham Staines and his two sons by Dara Singh and his associates is also an example of rare cases where people are considered guilty for communally driven crimes. Godhra carnage in 2002 was the first riot to get extensive media coverage.

The previous arguments on communalism as the by-products' of colonialism and British Policy of divide and rule were easily interpreted. But in the present day context, the reality is quite complex as communalism involves a complex interplay of many factors taking in both communalizing of politics and the politicization of religion, the jostling by different communities and the tensions created by mass conversion.

3.4 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

There has been no attempt to develop the theories of collective violence which specifies the general approaches to understand such violence. Some of the theories on origin are:

Structural Strain Theory

In his theory of collective behaviour, which can be considered to follow on from the tradition of 'theories of social disintegration or breakdown'? Neil J.Smelser (1963) not only develops a theoretical framework but also make his theory specify to the analysis of 'hostile outbursts'. He sees six factors that determine collective behaviour. (1) Structural conduciveness (2) structural strain (3) the growth and spread of generalised belief (4) precipitating factors (5) mobilization of participants (6) Deployment of social controls. Smelser formally defines a 'hostile outburst' as mobilization to action based on a hostile perception. The strain is further increased by the development of a hostile belief and generalised aggression when it comes to be directed against particular groups.

Collective Violence as a form of Social Control

An attempt to explain collective violence in terms of the theory of social control was made by Roberta Senechal de la Roche (1996) who understands certain forms of violence as the exercise of social control. A group moves to self-help by violence when it defines a form of conduct as deviant and reacts to it. She distinguishes four types of collective violence depending on the degree of organization and whether the deviant behaviour is attributed to an individual or a group: lynching (relatively unorganised and directed against individuals), pogrom/riot (relatively unorganised and directed against a group), vigilantism (highly organised and directed against individuals), and terrorism (highly organised and directed against a group).

Power Approach to Inter-group Hostility or Competitive Ethnicity

The conflict theory regards rioting as an extreme form of the expression of ethnic conflicts: 'we may say therefore, that race riots are extreme forms of racial conflict in which two racial groups struggle in a particular kind of political, social, economic and legal conflict setting, using riots as an alternative and ultimate technique to establish, maintain or change power relations in society'.(Swan,1980).Since pogroms are instituted by the dominant group, the aim of that group is generally not to bring about change, but to maintain or restore a particular social, economic, or political power and/or to prevent the minority obtaining an advantage.

Culturalist Approach

Harvey E.Goldberg (1977) stresses the ritualised character of programs. He stresses the cultural and symbolic logic of collective action in pogroms, which displays parallels to ritual activity. According to this approach, the destructive activity involved in programmes should (a)not be described negatively as 'unstructured' because there are existing cultural expectations among the actors regarding the course the action will take, and (b) not simply be regarded as a random expression of aggression because it follows condensed symbolic forms which originate in existing cultural traditions that often emphasize the polarity of social categories, while (c) the symbolic forms may simultaneously be aimed at the creation of a new order or the restoration of the old and, (d) this symbolic aspect places pogroms in a historical context and hence gives them a significance extending beyond the individual motives of the participants (1977).Religious riots are often extension of religious rituals, and in some cases their course too is ritualised.

3.5 CAUSATIVE FACTORS

The intense and unprecedented barbarity witnessed during many of the communal riots in India cannot be assigned to any single factor. In fact communal riots have been constructed or as Brass would say 'institutionalised'

and there are many factors involved in its causation. Various perspectives have emerged from scholars who have different ways of interpreting the problem. On the one hand, sociologists perceive the problem of communalism as a result of 'relative deprivation' whereas the Marxist scholars analyse the class dimension involved in communalism. Some political scientists view the problem resulting from power struggle and establishing hegemony over a particular group. Scholars like Ashis Nandy have claimed that the modern institutions of mass democracy and secularism distorted the modes of social relations of Indian society and were responsible for the violence accompanying modern politics in India. There are other group of scholars who perceive the problem of communalism as a result of religious fundamentalism and communal group conflicts and religiously inspired violence are seen as defensive reactions against experiences of alienation, anomie, relative deprivation and exclusion in the face of rapid socio-economic change. Some perceptions on causative factors can be analysed.

Bipan Chandra: Communalism and false consciousness

Bipan Chandra uncovers the class analysis on communalism in his book Communalism in Modern India, 1984. He focuses on the middle class or the petty bourgeoisie base of communalism under conditions of relative economic stagnation. The distorted pattern of colonial economy produced a large middle or service or tertiary class which neither integrated with the productive sectors nor capable of being productively absorbed by the colonial economy or by underdeveloped capitalism today. Because of economic stagnation the middle classes were compelled to compete with each other for scarce opportunities and resources. The crisis of the colonial economy and society constantly generated two opposing sets of ideologies and political tendencies among the petty bourgeoisie. On the one hand, when social change and revolution appeared as immediate possibilities the petty bourgeoisie enthusiastically joined the struggle for radical transformation of their existing social condition. On the other hand, when revolutionary change receded into the background the petty bourgeoisie shifted to short-term considerations and advantages, to the struggle for individual survival, to egoistic and selfish politics, that is to the strategy of trying to recover or maintain the existing social position. Groupings around religion leading to communalism, and other similar groupings and ideologies, could and did play an important role in this struggle (Chandra, 1984).

Steven Wilkinson

Wilkinson argues that ethnic riots are far from being spontaneous eruptions of anger. Instead they are often planned by politicians for a clear electoral purpose. Subsequently, it then follows that these very politicians will also prevent riots if and when it is in their interest to do so. These violent conflagrations are, therefore caused by political elites who play on existing

communal tensions to advance a political agenda (Wilkinson, 2003).Further Wilkinson provides three explanations for differences in state performances. Firstly, decades of corruption, criminalization, politicization and general lack of state capacity have left Indian state governments too weak to prevent riots. Second, Indian state governments are unable or unwilling to protect minorities because they systematically under represent them within their governments, police forces and local administrations. Lastly, the degree of party competition affects the value governments place on attracting 'Muslim swing voters', which effect whether or not the government will order the respective administrations to protect the minorities.

Wilkinson further finds the relationship between state autonomy (lack of political interference) and state capacity is inversely proportional to variations in occurrence of Hindu-Muslim riots.

Ashutosh Varshney

In peaceful cities, an institutionalised peace system exists, where organizations are commonly integrated. These civic organizations, for all practical purposes become the ears and arms of the local administration. It then follows that, if the civic edifice is inter-ethnic and associational, it can take 'ethnic earthquake' such as a partition and desecration of a holy place. If the form of civic engagement is inter-ethnic in everyday, earthquakes of smaller intensity can bring the edifice down. Varshney states that, a multi ethnic society with a few inter-connections across ethnic boundaries is very vulnerable to ethnic disorders and violence (Varshney, 2002).

For example in Hyderabad city, mostly Hindus and Muslims do not meet in a civic setting where mutual relations can be formed. Lacking these networks, even competent police officers and administrators watch a riot unfolding helplessly.

Sociologists like Imitiaz Ahmed views Hindu-Muslim conflict as an extension of wider social conflict that includes inter as well as intra-communal riots, caste violence and other forms of sectional upheavals. The emphasis placed on Hindu-Muslim conflict in case of social and communal violence comes but naturally considering the huge impact the various riots between the two communities have had on the Indian polity and society.

However, the above arguments have explored the various means of interpreting the causes of communal violence in India. While analysing the causative factors for communalism, a close correlation between religion, communalism and communal riots are established. In this regard are four main categories which can be explored and underscored in terms of aspirations, attitudes and actions.

The first is that of the religious. People in this category have the traits of tolerance, compassion and humility instilled in them. These traits spring

from their religiosity. They are rooted in the religious culture, rituals, customs and traditions. They seek solutions to personal problems by the mode of religious thinking.

Second category is that of 'communalist' who politicises religion. They belong to that religious stream or tendency which is highly self-conscious, and they promote strong and proud identification with their religion. They seek solutions to social and political questions on the basis of the principles enshrined in religious texts and scriptures. They are self-righteous and therefore lean towards moral and religious fundamentalism.

The third category is that of militant communalism who primarily emerges as a result of political mobilization of the communalists. Militant communalists are the ideologies of communalism par excellence. They glorify their religion to the extent of decrying other religious communities. Keeping in view the political mobilization of the communalists in colonial and post-colonial periods, the emergence of militant communalism was almost inevitable.

The fourth category is that of the 'rioteers' .Though they are absolutely unrelated to the first but are indirectly related to the second category and ideologically aligned with the third category. They succeed in isolating the religious by making them ineffective. Lacking in socio-cultural and political assertiveness, the religious are marginalised and frequently capitulate to the dreaded actions of the rioters. Rioteers are sometimes part of the political machines manipulating electoral politics in conformity with the interests of specific, powerful, social and local groups in the society (Puri, 1991).

However, this analytical framework helps one to recognize the various underlying forces which are instrumental is causing communalism. So, communal tensions are the outcome of many inter-related factors in a country like India which is marked by enormous religious, linguistic and regional diversity.

3.6 PREVENTING COMMUNALISM: IS SECULARISM THE WAY OUT?

The problem of communalism and communal harmony in India is indeed, a matter of importance, concern and discussion. It is because of the fact that communal frenzy and religious intolerance can pose a serious threat and danger not only to integration and prosperity of the country but also to our national unity. One must realize that the complex religious, regional and linguistic diversities, overemphasis on nationalism as distinct from patriotism makes the former almost indistinguishable from Hindu communalism. It is easier to argue that before independence, the communal riots were the result of the British policy of Divide and Rule. Shifting the burden on someone

else is perhaps the best strategy in such matters. But now the reality is different and known to be more complex, taking in both communalizing of politics and the politicization of religion, the jostling by different communities for their own interests and the emergence of leaders who speak only for their own community. Several questions arise in this context. Why did the administration fail to combat such an important issue? What can be done to reverse the surging tide of communalism before it engulfs the entire country?

However, in this regard a very pertinent question arises that is whether secularism the way out for communalism. Secularism may be described as a movement intentionally ethical, negatively religious, with political and philosophical antecedent (Hastings, 1985). D.E. Smith has examined the secular state as:

A State which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religions. According to him the conception of a secular state involves three distinct but inter-related sets of relationship concerning,

    (i) Religion and Individual (freedom of religion)

    (ii) The State and the Individual (citizenship)

    (iii) The State and Religion (separating State and Religion)

Freedom of religion means, that the individual is free to consider and to discuss with others the relative claims of differing religions and to come to his decision without any interference from the State. With the second set of relationship, the secular state views the individual as citizen, and not as a member of a particular religious group. And in the last set of separation of State and religion, the underlying assumption is simply that the religion and the state function in two basically different areas of human activity, each with its own objectives and methods. It is not the function of the state to promote, regulate, direct or otherwise interfere in religion (Smith, 1963).

This idea of secularism is boldly traceable in the basic framework of the Indian Constitution. However in modern India the meaning of secularism as Ashish Nandy would claim has two connotations.

The first meaning becomes clear when people talk of secular trends in history or economics, or when they speak of secularizing the state. The word 'secular' has been used in this sense, at least in the English-speaking West, for many years. This secularism chalks out an area in public life where religion is not admitted. One can have religion in one's private life; one can be a good Hindu or a good Muslim within one's home or at one's place of worship. But when one enters public life, one is expected to leave one's faith behind. This ideology of secularism is associated with slogans like 'India first'. In contrast, the non-western meaning of secularism revolves around equal respect

for all religions. This is the way it is usually put by public figures. It implies that while the public life may or may not be kept free of religion, it must have space for a continuous dialogue among religious traditions and between the religious and secular-that, in the ultimate analysis, each major faith in the region includes within it an in house version of other faiths, both as an internal criticism and as a reminder of the diversity of the theories of transcendence (Nandy, 1990).

To many Indians, secularism comes as a larger package consisting of a set of standardised ideological products and social processes-development, megascience and national security being some of the most prominent among them. This package often plays the same role vis-a vis the people of the society—sanctioning or justifying violence against the weak and the dissenting—that the Church, the ulema, the sangha and the Brahmans played in earlier times (Nandy, 1990).

The above arguments emphasize on the complex character of Indian secular state. The rich diversity of religious life as well as the legacy of communalism and partition, the influence of traditional Hindu values as well as impact of the West, the leadership of religious Gandhi and agnostic Nehru, the tendency of traditional religion to regulate virtually every aspect of life and the tendency of the modern State to do the same –all these factors and many others are a part of a complex pattern. India has strived to be a secular State not only in terms of contrast with historic civilisation but also in contrast with the policies of neighbouring countries. Despite the different policies of India's immediate neighbours, India has achieved and sustained secularism, but not communal harmony. Secularism appears to be failing to eliminate sectarian conflicts fermenting the Indian society for decades.

Thus secularism is the not only means to remove communalism and for dealing with communal violence more effective measures is required. People who preach communal hatred from religious places and their sympathisers and those who glorify violence should be dealt more strictly than the rioters themselves. A new consensus can be forged on the role of religion by adopting a democratic agenda which must include the following: creating statutory mechanisms for resolving inter-community disputes; promoting unceasing democratic dialogue with communalists and mounting democratic pressures on communalists to understand the conditions instrumental for ideology formulation and making conscious efforts to get religion as a critical and powerful ally of secularism and deepening the latter with egalitarian values.

Moreover, respecting religious pluralism and recognizing democratic and cultural regionalism to strengthen the consensual political culture. Such a democratic agenda alone can halt the communalization of the State and enable it to curb communal riots decisively and firmly by ;creating a climate

for intervention and assertion of the religious in combating communal riots. The communal strains may not be eradicated but the socio-cultural disturbances caused by communal riots may be stopped. This will also strengthen the resolve of the civil society to debate on communalism.

At the end, it can be said that a democratic, secular and socialist polity vigorously promoted can be an effective antidote to communal politics. This can be achieved only when the focus of politics is not merely to win elections but to generate strong pressures through political campaigns and mass mobilizations for solving people's socio-economic problems. In the Indian context secularism cannot be completely divested of religious sensibilities. Our religio-cultural ethos does not yet permit any such approach. The question is of masses at large and their religious sensibilities. The secular leaders of various religious communities can come together and form solidarity committees to fight communalists in whichever community they might be. For this it is important to do honest and rigorous criticism of what is bad in one's community and acknowledge with generosity what is good in the other community. Such an approach can build bridges of understanding and mutual confidence (Engineer, 1994).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is communalism?
2. What are communal riots?
3. Through which theoretical perspectives can communalism be understood?
4. Define secularism.
5. List D.E. Smith's three inter-related sets of relationship as regards conception of a secular state.

3.7 SUMMARY

- India has been a society of which has a deep history of external aggression. Indian society has been the finest example of accommodation and assimilation with the alien cultures in spite of their resentment to the outside forces.

- Communalism can be conceptualized as an ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one's own religion and at the same time antagonism against the other religion. Such an ideology divides the society into religious groups who have differing interests and their interests are sometimes opposed to each other.

- Communalism culminates in communal violence and these riots have become a distinctive feature of communalism. The clash of two religious groups and their internal tension results in communal riots. While communalism breeds communal politics, riots are clear manifestation of communal tension.

- Scholars like Ashis Nandy have claimed that the modern institutions of mass democracy and secularism distorted the modes of social relations of Indian society and were responsible for the violence accompanying modern politics in India.

- The problem of communalism and communal harmony in India is indeed, a matter of importance, concern and discussion. It is because of the fact that communal frenzy and religious intolerance can pose a serious threat and danger not only to integration and prosperity of the country but also to our national unity.

- It can be said that a democratic, secular and socialist polity vigorously promoted can be an effective antidote to communal politics. This can be achieved only when the focus of politics is not merely to win elections but to generate strong pressures through political campaigns and mass mobilizations for solving people's socio-economic problems.

3.8 KEY TERMS

- **Communalism:** Ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one's own religion and at the same time antagonism against the other religion.

- **Communal Riots:** Phenomena where religion, in any of its forms, is either the subject or object of individual or collective violent behaviour.

- **Assimilationist Communalism:** Small religious groups are assimilated into a big religious group. The forced conversions are included in this category. Incidents of re-conversion can also be termed as assimilationist communalism.

- **Retreatist Communalism:** In this kind of communalism, a small religious community keeps itself away from politics; example, the Bahai Community.

- **Retaliatory Communalism:** This kind of communalism attempts to harm, hurt and injure the members of other religious communities; for example, killing of priests etc.

- **Militant Communalism:** Primarily emerges as a result of political mobilization of the communalists.

3.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Communalism can be conceptualized as an ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one's own religion and at the same time antagonism against the other religion.

2. Communalism and communal riots/violence: while communalism breeds communal politics riots are clear manifestation of communal tension. Communal politics is long term, persistent and continuous.

3. Communalism can be understood through various theoretical perspectives like Marxist, culturalist and socio-psychological explanations.

4. In a modern society secularism is generally referred to, in the words of Peter Berger, as 'the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols'.

5. i. Religion and Individual (freedom of religion)

   ii. The State and the Individual (citizenship)

   iii. The State and Religion (separating State and Religion)

3.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on communism.

2. Outline the various theoretical approaches to understand communalism.

3. Write a brief note on factors causing communalism.

4. Write short notes on (i) Assimilationist Communalism, and (ii) Retreatist Communalism.

5. What is secularism?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the incidence of communalism in India.

2. Is secularism the way out to communalism? Discuss.

3. Analyse the communal problem in India and also discuss the important the various efforts which should be taken to overcome this problem.

4. 'A democratic, secular and socialist polity vigorously promoted can be an effective antidote to communal politics.' Elaborate.

3.11 FURTHER READING

Brass, Paul. 2003. *The Production of Hindu Muslim Violence in Contemporary India.* University of Washington Press.

Chandra, Bipan, 1984. *Communalism in Modern India.* New Delhi: Vikas Publications.

Smelser, Neil.J.1963.*Theory of Collective Behaviour.* New York: The Free Press.

Swan, L.Alex 1980.*The Politics of Riot Behaviour.* Washington: University Press of America.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

UNIT 4 HEALTH

Structure

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the community health through education, endorsement of healthy lifestyles, and study for disease and injury prevention. In general, public health concerns itself with caring for and safeguarding the health of entire populations. These populations can be a local neighborhood, or an entire country. In this unit, you will learn about the role of sociology in public health; HIV and sociology's role in countering its menace; the problems faced by the elderly and institutions that take care of them, etc.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the role of sociology in public health
- Elaborate on the role of sociology in dealing with HIV AIDS
- Discuss the problems faced by the elderly in the society, and institutions that cater to their needs

4.2 SOCIOLOGY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health has been and remains a very applied field. It is also characterized by a population-based approach to health, and statistical methods are deemed the appropriate underlying method for the field. It is viewed as a science that seeks to intervene, control, and prevent large-scale processes that negatively

affect the public's health. By these criteria, there is a strong logical fit of sociological principles and practices within public health. Nonetheless, sociology has not been the key social science discipline in public health. That position has gone to psychology, where the emphasis on individual behaviour resonates more with a biomedical model. Despite this, many of the primary concerns of present-day public health, with large-scale variables such as social capital, social inequality, social status, and health care organization and financing, remain topics best suited to the sociological perspective and methodology. The emphasis in public health is thus shifting toward a sociological perspective.

Sociological Concepts in Public Health

Sociology in public health is reflected in the myriad of sociological concepts that pervade the practice of public health. More than any other social science, sociology has the discussion of socioeconomic status at its very core. Social-class variation within society is the key explanatory variable in sociology—for everything from variation in social structure to differential life experiences of health and illness. Indeed, there appears to be overwhelming evidence that Western industrialized societies that have little variation in social class experience have far better health outcomes than societies characterized by wide social-class dispersion. In short, inequalities in health are directly related to social and economic inequalities. Much of later-twentieth-century public health is devoted to the reduction of these inequalities.

Sociological Methods in Public Health

Methodological concerns are critical to sociological research. The great debate in sociology has been on the relative merits and role of quantitative versus qualitative approaches. Both approaches are widely used and play a critical role for public health. Sociology has long recognized that the social world comprises both an objective and a subjective reality. For example, the objective reality of having cancer is accompanied by the subjective reality of the experience of cancer by the patient, and the patient's family and friends. Both realities are relevant to the sociological approach. The subjective, qualitative approach is generally discussed in the theory and methods concerned with illness behaviour, but qualitative approaches are equally applicable to the understanding of social policy, world systems, and areas of sociology where statistical measurement is difficult or less relevant.

Within public health, surveillance is seen as a key approach to describing the distribution and dynamics of disease. In sociological approaches to public health, the role of social and behavioural factors in health and illness is central. Survey methodology has occupied a central place in sociological research since the middle of the twentieth century. The concern has been with the collection, management, analysis, interpretation, and use of large quantities of data obtained by direct interview with respondents.

Social surveys are characterized by large random samples, complicated questionnaires, and the use of multivariate statistics for analysis. By their very nature, most sociological variables are complex to measure and to analyze. For example, the assessment of socioeconomic status of an individual requires the accurate measurement of several variables that sit within a larger social context. Socioeconomic status (SES) is regarded as a product of several components, including income, residence, education, and occupation. Determining the relative weight of each of these components is a major analytical problem. Thus, when considering the role of socioeconomic status on health care outcomes, there is no easy answer to what mechanism actually works to determine the observed relationship between SES and health.

Sociology and Evaluation in Public Health

Because many sociological variables are at the so called macro level, there is limited opportunity to intervene rapidly, directly, or simply. For example, the SES of a group is affected by complex components, such as education and occupation that are part of the total life course of individuals within the group. Thus, to change the SES of a group would require significant redistribution of resources of the larger social structure. A significant period of time and concerted effort is needed to change such macro variables. This is, however, not dissimilar to many other challenges in public health, such as the long-term and time-consuming effort to change lifestyles and reduce behavioural risk factors related to chronic diseases.

The chief role of sociology in public health remains its evaluation of those macro components of society that affect public health at the population level. Such evaluations provide an understanding of why inequalities in health exist, and they help elaborate upon the mechanisms and processes that sustain these inequalities. This relates to the long-standing theoretical concern with social structure among sociologists. Further, sociology reveals the mechanisms for long-term changes that may lead to a reduction in health inequalities. The product of sociological thinking in public health is not immediate or easily understood by those who seek quick and easy solutions to the suffering of humanity. Nonetheless, the long-term role of sociology in public health is to change and improve the public health.

4.3 HIV AND SOCIOLOGY

AIDS, sociological studies of The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a complex of symptoms and ultimately deadly infections caused by the Human Immuno-deficiency Viruses (HIV). An initial period of high infectivity is followed after some three months by the appearance of HIV antibodies, which signal a reaction to the HIV infection, and on which the main tests for the condition are based. Following what are often years of

symptom-free living, the body finally succumbs to normally rare and unusual diseases, especially PCP (Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia) and KS (Karposi's Sarcoma). The main vehicles of transmission are the bodily fluids, especially blood (blood transfusion, intravenous drug use, and vertical transmission from mother to child) and semen, chiefly by means of penetrative sexual intercourse (homosexual or heterosexual). The World Health Organization distinguishes three zones and patterns of infection: Asia, which is now the principal growth area of infection; the African continent (site of the initial discovery, and where transmission is primarily heterosexual in form); and industrialized Western nations (where an epidemic started in the 1980s, with infection primarily transmitted by homosexual intercourse, and intravenous drug needle-sharing). In 1996 it was estimated that 30 million people were infected by HIV and 10 million living with AIDS.

Sociology has contributed in various ways to the understanding and control of AIDS/HIV infection. Studies of sexual networks of transmission were crucial for identifying the virus in 1982. Sociology has also informed national and large-scale studies of sexual and drug-taking behaviour, both KABP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices), and the more innovative and qualitative research that is necessary to monitor the prevalence and incidence of high-risk behaviour and risk-taking activity. Theories of risk-taking have also developed from early reliance on the Health Belief Model to contextual and strategic aspects and the study of collective and community response.

Because the activities implicated in the transmission of AIDS are in many societies either illegal or tend to involve already marginalized groups, sociological studies of gender, deviance, and sexual identity have been used to focus research studies. Techniques have been devised to identify and sample hard-to-reach and 'hidden populations', such as intravenous drug-users and non-gay-identified men who have sex with men, by extending existing sociological and anthropological methodologies. Methods such as sexual diaries have been employed to elicit intrusive information as non-reactively as possible.

4.4 AGING

The biological and sociological problems of aging, although complementary, are quite disparate. Biological research on the progressive changes taking place in the aging organism deals with objective anatomical and physiological phenomena directly measurable by physically standardized instruments. Sociological investigation of the interrelationships of the aging organism and the sociocultural environment, on the other hand, is concerned with covert or subjective attitudes and values that are only indirectly measurable by instruments.

These, in turn, involve various culturally conditioned judgments in their construction, and require constant revision and re-standardization with advances in theory and changes in cultural value systems, if they are commensurable at all. Furthermore, as we pass from the biological to the sociological investigation of aging, the locus of research shifts from the more static conditions of the laboratory and clinic to the more dynamic settings of fieldwork where scientific controls are at best crude, and often impossible. In no field is it more difficult to transmute the particularities of individual case study into the generalities of statistical analysis.

Again, unlike biological systems, human social systems are structured not by the genetically determined reaction patterns of the biological units that compose them, but by behaviour patterns invented and acquired in social interaction. These socially derived patterns constitute the systems of cultural values which determine the social structure of human groups. Such structures do not age and die. They either commit suicide by man's inability to devise new patterns capable of dealing with the problems generated from within, or they are murdered by his inability to repel conquest from without. A social system is simply the blueprint according to which interpersonal and social functions have occurred in the past, are occurring in the present, and may be predicted to recur in the future.

Therefore, the aging of an individual, as a sociocultural phenomenon, is defined not by physical deterioration or by time but by the value system of his society. A person is sociologically old when he is so regarded and treated by his socii. The problems of personal and social adjustment confronting the aged are the resultants of the role and status accorded them by the group, the social provisions for their continuing prestige and security, and the opportunities afforded them to achieve these ends by their own initiative.

4.4.1 Problems of the Elderly

Sociologically considered, the problem of aging in contemporary western culture is a new phenomenon in human history in at least four ways. Two of these, the increasing number of the aged and the extension of the time during which they enjoy (or suffer) that status, are too well known to require more than passing mention.

Two other circumstances have so completely changed the sociological character of the problem that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that prior to their emergence the problem did not exist. These are the abruptness of the social transition from productivity to retirement and the loss of role and status that accompanies it. In the simpler cultures, as well as in our own until the last 2 or 3 generations, the gradualness of the physiological changes was paralleled by

Tradition and Status

In societies with ascribed status there are at least six distinct roles ascribed to the aged that give them a recognized and assured social position:

First, the aged are the preservers and disseminators of the knowledge of the group. They are its library as well as its teachers, for the sacred lore is stored only in their memories. As a Yoruba proverb states it, 'A man may be born to fortune, but wisdom comes only with length of days.'

Second, by virtue of this monopoly the aged hold a strategic position in deciding the policies of the group. The maxim, 'Old men for council, young men for war,' is practically universal in traditionally oriented societies.

Third, and closely associated with the foregoing, are the rights and privileges associated with parental authority and the ownership and management of family property. These prerogatives may persist long after death through the sacred and binding character often accorded by the culture to the dying wishes of family heads with regard to property and other matters within their jurisdiction.

Fourth, the aged are often the magicians, witch doctors, priests, and seers as well as the sages of the group. This role also frequently survives death through the prevalence of ancestor worship and fear of ghosts.

Fifth, they possess the experience and skill required to supervise the industrial and decorative arts. All these are roles that require little physical strength or stamina. They can be performed as long as accurate memory, sound judgment, and social skill in managing interpersonal relationships continue. They are also highly honorific roles whose prestige usually outlives the person's capacity to perform them and give to age as such a respect and dignity that redounds to the benefit of less competent contemporaries. For the latter there remains a sixth role. The lighter auxiliary tasks of field and herd, of hearth and household fall to their hands. By these activities they release mature adults of both sexes for more strenuous work and so maintain their status as participants in the common life.

4.4.2 Old-Age Institutions

Old age homes are meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute. States in India such as Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal have developed good quality old age homes. These old age homes have special medical facilities for senior citizens such as mobile health care systems, ambulances, nurses and provision of well-balanced meals.

There are more than a thousand old age homes in India. Most of them offer free accommodation. Some homes work on a payment basis depending on the type and quality of services offered. Apart from food, shelter and medical amenities, old age homes also provide yoga classes to senior citizens.

Old age homes also provide access to telephones and other forms of communication so that residents may keep in touch with their loved ones. Some old age homes have day care centres. These centres only take care of senior citizens during the day.

For older people who have nowhere to go and no one to support them, old age homes provide a safe haven. These homes also create a family like atmosphere among the residents. Senior citizens experience a sense of security and friendship when they share their joys and sorrows with each other. Here is a list of a few old age homes in India.

4.4.3 Home-Based Care

As more and more baby boomers reach retirement, many are wondering what their options are for long-term care. While many will use nursing homes and other institutionalized care, home and community based care is becoming a popular option for aging baby boomers.

As more and more elderly adults live longer, there is an accentuated need for elder care. For centuries elderly adults have needed and received long-term care from family and friends. The mid-1900s saw an increase in nursing homes and other institutionalized care. However, recent shifts in long-term care indicate that while nursing homes are still used, community and home-based long-term care seems to be taking prominence in long-term elder care.

In studies conducted by AARP elderly adults indicate that they would rather stay in their own homes to receive long-term care. Greater resources in the community have made it possible for many elderly adults who would typically need nursing home services to stay in the comfort of their own home for long-term care. Elderly adults need care in varying degrees. Typically elderly adults receive help from family and friends. However, as their health declines older adults rely on skilled nursing services and other long-term care options.

Elderly adults receiving long-term care in their community are sure to use a variety of services. Most often elderly adults receive some kind of skilled nursing or home health services. These services help elderly adults with their medical needs as well as help with bathing and hygiene. Many older adults also receive some sort of cleaning and/or meal service. Other services that are offered in the community include services such as assisted living, hospice, adult day services, and physical therapy and senior centers.

Elderly adults who use community and home-based services for their long-term care will experience several advantages to using this type of care over nursing home care. Most notably community-based long-term care allows elderly adults to stay in their homes for care. Community services also give many elderly adults the opportunity to attend social events with

other older adults. In many cases, elderly adults receiving home and community-based long-term care continue to stay active in their communities.

Older adults in need of long-term care services are frequently turning to home and community-based care for their needs. This shift from nursing home care to home-based care allows many elderly adults to continue living in their own homes. The many services offered to elderly adults in the community help them with their needs as they age.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is sociology in public health?
2. How has sociology helped in curbing high-risk diseases?
3. What are old age homes?
4. State one advantage of home-based care over institutionalized care.

4.5 SUMMARY

- Public health has been and remains a very applied field. It is also characterized by a population-based approach to health, and statistical methods are deemed the appropriate underlying method for the field. It is viewed as a science that seeks to intervene, control, and prevent large-scale processes that negatively affect the public's health.

- The biological and sociological problems of aging, although complementary, are quite disparate. Biological research on the progressive changes taking place in the aging organism deals with objective anatomical and physiological phenomena directly measurable by physically standardized instruments.

- Sociologically considered, the problem of aging in contemporary western culture is a new phenomenon in human history in at least four ways. Two of these, the increasing number of the aged and the extension of the time during which they enjoy (or suffer) that status, are too well known to require more than passing mention.

- Old age homes are meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute. States in India such as Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal have developed good quality old age homes. These old age homes have special medical facilities for senior citizens such as mobile health care systems, ambulances, nurses and provision of well-balanced meals.

- As more and more baby boomers reach retirement, many are wondering what their options are for long-term care. While many will use nursing homes and other institutionalized care, home and community based care is becoming a popular option for aging baby boomers.

4.6 KEY TERMS

- **HIV:** HIV is the short way to say Human immunodeficiency virus. It is a virus that attacks the part of our bodies that helps us fight off infections and illness—the immune system. HIV makes minor infections and illness much harder to recover from.

- **Human social systems:** Here, socially derived patterns constitute the systems of cultural values which determine the social structure of human groups.

- **Old-Age homes:** Meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute.

4.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Sociology in public health is reflected in the myriad of sociological concepts that pervade the practice of public health. More than any other social science, sociology has the discussion of socioeconomic status at its very core.

2. Sociology has also informed national and large-scale studies of sexual and drug-taking behaviour, both KABP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practices), and the more innovative and qualitative research that is necessary to monitor the prevalence and incidence of high-risk behaviour and risk-taking activity.

3. Old age homes are meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute.

4. Elderly adults who use community and home-based services for their long-term care will experience several advantages to using this type of care over nursing home care. Most notably community-based long-term care allows elderly adults to stay in their homes for care.

4.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on social concepts in the field of public health.
2. What are the social problems faced by people as they grow old?

3. Outline the six distinct roles ascribed to the aged that give them a recognized and assured social position, in societies with ascribed status.

4. Write a short note on old-age institutions.

Long-Answer Questions

1. What part has sociology played in the field of public health? Elaborate.

2. Explain the role of sociology in dealing with HIV AIDS.

3. What are old-age homes and how are they different from home-based and community care? Explain.

4.9 FURTHER READING

Conrad, Peter. 2008. *The Sociology of Health and Illness*, Eighth edition. Worth Publishers.

Weitz, Rose. 2009. *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach,* Fifth edition. Wadsworth Publishing.

UNIT 5 CHILDREN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

After having a broad idea about the various social problems confronting India, in this unit you will learn about an important segment of population, i.e., children who are in difficult circumstances. The unit will introduce you to the problem of child labour, types of child labourers, causes of child labour and important measures undertaken to eradicate child labour. The unit will also help you to understand the problem of street children and immoral trafficking among children.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of child labour
- Analyse the various types of child labourers
- Examine the causes of child labour
- Analyse the various measures undertaken to eradicate this social malady
- Understand the problems of street children
- Explore the problem of immoral trafficking among children

5.2 MEANING OF CHILD LABOUR

The problem of Child labour has been an important concern area of the international community. Driven by a desire to protect those who often are most vulnerable from deplorable and extreme working conditions, both the national and international communities have sought to implement laws and standards to regulate child labour (Potobsky, 1995). One of the most pressing social problems confronting India is the problem of 'working child' or 'employed child'. In India, child labourers are actually children without childhood, can be seen employed in almost all spheres of formal and informal sectors of the economy.

Child labour is a serious and contentious issue throughout the developing world and it is demeaning and damaging to a child's health and intellectual development. So, child labour continues to be a problem whose form and meaning shifts with social, economic, geographic, and cultural context. In some regions, child labour is reconstituted form its customary form to an exploitative one. Irregular working hours, working under hazardous circumstances, low wages, inhuman treatment, poor health conditions characterise child labour in many regions of the world. According to an International Labour Organisation Report (ILO), there are an estimated 245 million child labourers in the world. Even the industrialised and developed countries are not away from this problem.

Child labour is the basis of economic activities in many Asian developing countries and many consumer goods including export commodities such as carpets, clothing, and agricultural commodities are produced by them. Child labour practices also occur in a range of potentially hazardous tasks such as gem mining, construction, commercial farming and transporting goods and services. Poverty, absence of accessible schools in the villages and the shortage of teachers prevent children from attending school and keep them in employment with meagre returns (Ravallion and Woodon, 2004).

5.3 DEFINING CHILD LABOUR

UNICEF and International Labour Organisation (ILO) along with some other organisations have taken up the responsibility of defining child labour and clarifying the concept of child work. According to UNICEF, child work is children's or adolescent's participation in work and economic activity that does not negatively affect their health and development or interferes with their education. The concept of child labour is based on the Minimum Age Convention (ILO Convention 138, adopted in 1973). Although the Convention 138 states that the minimum age for employment should not be less than