

# Individual behaviour and influence on society



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Sociology is defined as the study of social life of human beings. It helps social analysts to understand the working of human beings and society (Moore Kelly, 2008). Relationship between the individual and society has formed the major basis of sociological principles.

### **George Ritzer's Integration model:**

Ritzer's model is a good example of sociological theory based on integrationist approach. It combines both macro and micro level theories in it. According to him, there are four highly interdependent elements in the society which are a macro objective component, a micro objective component, a macro subjective component, a micro subjective component. This theory is beneficial in understanding the society in both objective and subjective levels. It also aims at understanding the society norms and individual benefits from the society (Ritzer et al., 2003).

Adapted from (Ritzer et al., 2003)

According to this theory, all the four components are distinct and interdependent to influence the society. It emphasizes that individuals can change cultural norms and society according to their behaviour.

Behaviour of the individual doesn't essentially influence the society. However certain habits may create positive or negative effect on the society. When a individual tries and modifies their bodies away from the knowledge of the society, it makes no difference. However, when individual tries to modify the society by habits and behaviour, it creates a social impact.

According to Ann Swidler, ideology is a determining factor for influencing empowerment in the society and body modification is one such ideology. Body modification increased rapidly in the western countries over the years and slowly spreading to other countries as a trend of fashion. Body modification refers to changes to the external appearance of the body by using devices or fashion to change the body rapidly or gradually. Some of the body modifications include tattooing, piercing, cutting, branding, inserting rings or studs to ears, navel, nose, eye brows (Featherstone, 1999). Body modification can also be extended to the practices such as gymnastics, dieting and physical exercising techniques to alter the existing body structure. These modifications are gradually occurring and take a period of time to get noticeable (Featherstone, 1999).

Use of technology in body modifications is another additional practice, and this includes wearing spectacles for clear vision, using hearing aids and various body implants at heart, kidney and skin surfaces. Use of these modifications is necessary in normal functioning of a body in absence of regular controlled physiological process. When the body tends to become weak or unable to resist changes, these technological devices and nano technological products are used within or over the body to improve health condition and reduce pain in human beings (Featherstone, 1999).

Science and fiction influence body modification procedures indirectly by fascination and intention to follow or copy. Films are the major sources of science fiction and some of them include Robocop (Paul Verhoeven, 1987), Blade runner (Michael Deeley and Ridley Scott, 1982). Some of the films also

emphasized on cyberspace and its influences which markedly improved fashion sense of human beings (William Gibson, 1986).

Media and magazines are alternatively cheaper resources to human beings which influence fashion. These resources create a cultural impact on human beings to adapt very commonly to makeovers and changeovers. Cultural aspects of the society have been gradually changing through media (Featherstone, 1982, 1991). Society tends to copy the fashion culture and adapts to it rapidly. Clothing is one such example, which changed over the years from extensive heavy clothing to lighter loose clothing exposing the skin (Bourdieu, 1978; Featherstone, 1987). However, these changes could create a wrong social and cultural impact on the society when wrongly used and interpreted in certain circumstances (Lloyd, 1996).

One of the major body modifications noticed almost everywhere is body building in men and dieting practices in women to change their body pattern to an entirely different look. According to Lee Monaghan, Males tend to inhabit the culture of musculature increasingly and depend on gym and training centres to shape out the body. They tend to adapt these changes to gain the attention of women and society. Females, on the other hand are in a trend of zero-size and slim versions and depend drastically on gym and dieting centres to shred the extra fat away (Featherstone, 1999). These attempts by the society although improves the health and physique of an individual, it also brings some deleterious changes in the human body. Some of the changes include unimaginable body shapes after rigorous work outs and change in the feminine body structure in females. According to Roberta, not every body reacts in the similar manner to technology and exercise.

<https://assignbuster.com/individual-behaviour-and-influence-on-society/>

Some bodies tend to improve and some tend to become abnormal in look and sense. In certain women, changeovers and makeovers could lead to deleterious effects such as change in feminine features (Doug Aaoki, 1996). She describes the use of lipsticks and feminine aids to restore the lost femininity. Regardless of all these attempts, it appears as 'gender crossing dressing' to the society (St Martin and Gavey, 1996). Many of the body modifications are irreversible and hence care should be taken in order to adapt to them.

Many of the body modifications are based on changing culture and fashion. Improving with fashion is different from complete transformation. Many of the body modifications cannot be reversed and irreversible body modifications are a risk to try (Paul Sweetman). Sweetman describes that fashion trends vary from person to person and permanence of fashion depends on the type of body modifications he is willing to adapt. According to Polhemus and Procter (1978), body modifications are anti-fashion trend followed in modern days and is a means of escapism to avoid the traditional attire. Giddens (1991) supports the context by description of 'body project' whereby tradition is dissolved in modern times with relevant excuse of fashion trends.

### **Positive influence of body modifications on the society:**

Body modifications are seen as positive phenomenon by various sociologists. Many of them describe it as growing modern with the changing world. Shildrick describes that society tends to change rapidly and body modification is an enhancement procedure to individualise and identify ones own self separately and uniquely. The positive aspect of modifying body

<https://assignbuster.com/individual-behaviour-and-influence-on-society/>

according to the latest trends to inculcate modernity in the system is appreciated by many modern sociologists.

In addition, Society has gained a lot from using certain body modifications to ease their lifestyle (Featherstone, 1999). Use of spectacles and hearing aids has improved style of living with betterment. Adventures in surgical and clinical field by body implants of heart, kidney and artificial limbs have created a milestone. Use of these clinical modifications reduced mortality rate and improved longevity of life (Featherstone, 1999). Use of artificial limbs has paved an ease of lifestyle for the physically challenged people. This improved their lifestyle and increased chances of competition and survival in complex modern life.

Body project as described by Giddens (1991) is complex and scrutinising the body projects by individuals for their own benefit has become a common practice in modern times. Use of clinical, scientific body modifications for the individual benefit is encouraged by many socialists and has become a common practice in all the places of the world. According to Virilio, body modifications are part of third technological revolution (Armitage, 1999).

### **Negative influence of body modifications on the society:**

Some sociologists have rightly said that great inventions or developments are always followed by potential risk to the society. The modern society has incorporated many body modifications as a part of their lifestyle. Many sociologists discuss that although human beings neglect the fast pace of time, time is always reflected in the body change (Featherstone, 1999).

Society has imbibed the craze of fashion and body modifications to the maximum and these changes tend to be irreversible and deleterious in certain conditions. One of the most objectionable body modifications is cutting and piercing. Insertion of studs and rings to various parts of the body has become a common practice in modern days. Victoria Pitts argues that body modification is seen as factor of mutilation by the media and severely leads to certain mental disorders. Irvine Walsch (1993) describes the body modification as a craze and addiction to the society.

### **Conclusion:**

In the modern era, body modification and fashion have become a common trend. Society has reacted to the new change increasing over the period of time. Although there is a positive impact of the new change in the society, the negative phenomenon is also associated along with it. Sociologists have mixed reactions to the change. The positive factor considered is reformation in medicine and improvement of human beings. The negative impact associated with it is craze, addiction and racism associated with the new fashion trend.