

# Social interaction

Sociology



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Essay on Social Interaction – Social interaction is the foundation of society. It is the very essence of social life. Hence, the concept is crucial to any study of the dynamics of society and culture. Without interaction there would be no group life. Mere presence of individuals in a place does not weld them into a social unit or group. It is when persons or groups of persons do such things as work or play or talk together with common end, or when they compete or quarrel with each other that group life, properly speaking, exists.

Thus, it can be said that interaction is the basic social process, the broadest term for describing dynamic social relationships. Social interaction is the dynamic element in society, while statuses and norms represent its static element. It is true that life is stable, confined and defined by traditional systems, norms and patterned ways. It is also true that life is fast-moving, dynamic and changing, breaking out at the weak point [or where conflict is greatest]. People are on the move.

They are striving, competing, conflicting, cooperating, appeasing, adjusting, reconciling and then challenging again. This action element or functional element itself represents social interaction. Definition: 1. Eldredge and Merrill: ' Social interaction is the general process whereby two or more persons are in meaningful contact as a result of which their behaviour is modified however slightly. ' 2. Dawson and Gettys: ' Social interaction is a process whereby men interpenetrate the minds of each other'. 3. Gish, N. P. : Social interaction is the reciprocal influence human beings exert on each other through interstimulation and response'. Two Conditions of Interaction: Park and Burgess are of the opinion that contact and communication are the two main conditions of social interaction. Contact: Contact is the first stage

of interaction. Contact means simply a coming together of independent social units [individuals]. It involves a mutual response, an inner adjustment of behaviour to the actions of others. The two kinds of contact are: (i) contact in time and (ii) contact in space.

The first one refers to contact of group with the earlier generations through customs, traditions, folkways, morals, etc. The second one refers to the relationship between contemporary individuals and groups within a particular area. The contacts may be primary and personal or secondary and impersonal in nature. Communication: Communication is the medium of interaction. In communication one person infers from the behaviour of another the idea or feeling of the other person. It may take place at three levels – through the senses, the emotions and the sentiments and ideas.

The first two are called ‘the natural forms of communication’. They are common to man and the animals. On the sensory level, seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching all play a role in evoking responses. On the emotional level, such thing as facial expression, blushing and laughing arouse responses. Communication on the third level, taking place, through the intellect, is, strictly limited to man. Here speech and language play an important role. Language helps man to transmit abstract ideas to his fellow beings.

It facilitates the transmission of cultural heritage. Direct and Symbolic Interaction: Interaction may be direct or symbolic. Direct interaction refers to the activities of a person which may be seen in such conduct as pushing, fighting, pulling, embracing, dashing, or in other forms of bodily contact with other individuals. Symbolic interaction consists of vocal or other gestures

and language, spoken or written. A symbol is a summary of experience. It may represent an object, act, quality, value, idea or any expected response.

Language is the rich store-house of such symbols. Interstimulation and

Response: The central nature of interaction is interstimulation and response. One stimulates the actions, thought or emotions of another person/s and responds to the similar behaviour of the others. Interaction increases mental activity, fosters comparison of ideas, sets new tasks, accelerates and discovers the potentialities of the individual. Importance of Interaction: Social interaction is the basic condition of our social existence.

It is the most inclusive group process. It is a context in which the personality grows. Man cannot be called man outside the range of human interaction. Groups develop through interaction with other groups and disintegrate without some stimulation from outside. Society exists only when a large number of persons are interacting. Human interaction takes place in the context of social expectations, rules and norms. Social interaction is the basic process through which human nature and social structure develop and are changed.