

Changing Perception of Communities: Rural to Virtual

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ABSTRACT

This research emphasized on the aspect of changing perception of traditional definition of ‘communities’ to the postmodern description of ‘New Community’ formation. Therefore, the central idea of this study is transformation from traditionalism to postmodernism. Furthermore, this research paper has described the factors accountable for such kind of changing pattern of society, apart from that it also encompassed the conceptual clarity of the terms traditional as well as new form of discourse communities. This research is based on literary analysis; in other way information gathered from secondary sources has been taken into consideration. Hence, different theoretical perspectives has taken into account to elaborate the aspect of changing features of community in today’s time which are in contradiction to the earlier description of the same. In such a way, this work has put light on the alterations in structural form of society because the abovementioned change is, in actuality, a consequence of modifications in the network of relationships.

Keywords: New community, Discourse, Transformation

INTRODUCTION

Society is basically defined as Web of social relationships. According to MacIver and page society is “a system of usages and procedures, authority and mutual aid, of many grouping and divisions, of control of human behavior and of liberties.” Generally, existence of communities in a society is regarded as a concrete form whereas society is abstract in nature. According to Bogardus “Community is a social group with some degree of ‘we feeling’ and living in a given area.” So, here community has distinct feature of connectivity in contrast to the society. Earlier, the definition of community had a specific characteristic of description that is related to the specific territory, but later on with the passage of time new form of community has been establishing where the common territory feature is disappearing. As Nimkoff and Ogburn defined ‘Community’ as “A total organization of social life within a limited area.” Modernity has been sweeping away the roles bought about by the traditional set up. Transformations in modernity includes both extensionality as well as intentionality (Giddens 1996) “On the extensional plane they have served to establish forms of social interconnection which span the globe; in intentional terms they have come to alter some of the most intimate and personal features of our day-to-day existence. Obviously there are continuities between the traditional and the modern”.

Robert Redfield had differentiated between 'Little and Great Communities' in his famous study of Mexican communities. He defines little community in other way Traditional community by four distinctive characteristics:

1. Distinctiveness-Where the community starts and where it ends is apparent
2. Smallness- Little community remains small in size.
3. Homogeneity- In any Traditional community the activities and state of mind are similar for all persons in relation to sex and age positions
4. Self Sufficiency- It provides for all or most of the needs and activities of the people in it.

Above-mentioned definition of community has been changed with the advent of modernity, which further includes technology, common and accepted goals of the members of society. Process of modernization encompasses various sources of bringing change as described by Anthony Giddens (1996).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To elaborate the concepts Traditional and virtual community.
2. Differentiation between traditional and new discourse community.
3. Explain how transformation takes place from traditional to modern.
4. Discuss the impact of modernization in above-mentioned change.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While took up the theme because of theoretical and conceptual interest Andre Beteille (2007), clarified that the primary object of the sociologists attention is neither the individual nor the notion but lies in between. There are the institutions, associations and networks of interpersonal relations that link individuals to each other and to the more inclusive society. "Today, I would like to focus attention on classes and communities as social formation that stand between the individual and the nation classes and communities are analytically distinct social categories.

Abraham's study on neighbourhood (Blumer, 1986) directly linked to the relationship between spatial and social aspects of relationship of people and to the countless definitions of community which encompasses a spatial feature. Abrams and McCulloch, 1976 work on communes also faced the issues of contested and evolving descriptions of community, because communes are considered as the new communal phenomenon but its explanation is not primarily based on specific territory based.

American Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1962) in his monumental work „The Structure of scientific Revolution“, had proposed that there are competing paradigms in science: one paradigm is discarded or demolished by new paradigm when takes place. Paradigm is a unified, a coherent framework, a way of thinking that a particular field of science holds about a universe, the way it works. The shifting of paradigms, after wars between them, leads to scientific progress that revolutionizes science itself.

Time-space distance encompasses present attention to the local people (face to face relations) and a distance place interaction. In the modern scenario, the extent of time-space distance is exponentially high as compare to the previous times. Therefore now the connections have been formed across the stretching point. So the relationships, which are now forming, are networked in such a way that there is huge extension of the human ties. "Globalization refers essentially to that stretching process, in so far as the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth's surface as a whole." Globalization can thus be defined as the "intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space."(Giddens, Anthony, 1996).

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Jackie Green (2004), it is stated that „Discourse Analysis“ is not merely the recording and classification of content or topics. Instead it involves penetrating beneath the surface of language or images and seeking out subtexts and meanings relating to wider beliefs and value system- often their social and political contexts.

Andre Beteille (2007: 945-952) contended that the primary object of sociologist’s attention is neither the individual nor the Nation, but lies in between“. There are the institutions, associations and networks of Interpersonal relations that link individuals to each other and to the more inclusive society. But contrary to old community new community may be defined in other ways and with reference to its context. So, new social formations are coming up around the subject of special attention.” The social networking here distanced the territory definitions of conventional community. Propositionally around every Discourse a community is developed that has specific context.

CONCEPTS:

Andre Beteille (2007: 945-952) contended that the primary object of sociologist’s attention is neither the individual nor the Nation, but lies „in between“. There are the institutions, associations and networks of Interpersonal relations that link individuals to each other and to the more inclusive society. But contrary to old community new „community“ may be defined in other ways and with reference to its context. So, new social formations are coming up around the subject. The social networking distanced the territory definitions of conventional community. Propositionally around every Discourse a community is developed that has specific context.

The Discourse community is a specialized community. This community generally formed around a particular discourse. The technical, industrial and business advancements in USA and European countries generate situations of the Discourse communities already. Sociologists and Philosophers like swales John (1990) and Deanna Mascle defined discourse community thus- “A discourse community is a group of people who speak the same language or in other words people who share an interests in certain topics, share a body of knowledge about those topics, and possesses a common vocabulary for discussing those topics.”

Swales, John (1990) perhaps is the first developer of the concept Discourse community, who placed basic features of discourse community, as follow:

1. Community of interest.
2. Inter-communication between members.
3. Survival by providing information and feedback Development of Genre-specific discourse expectation.
4. Possession of an embedded, dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialized terminology.
5. A critical mass of members with a suitable degree of relevant discourse and content expertise.

These above features helped the researcher identifying the process of discourse community formation. In this case of “Yoga Discourse Community” is visible built on Yoga-specific medical discourse under alternative health medicine vis-à-vis dominant allopathic medical discourse in India and abroad. One can find Yoga practice groups, in most of the Indian states in the morning hours in public parks, private lawns, within houses and in schools and other institutions. In all, millions of people in India and abroad irrespective of sex, age, occupation, class, and dwellings are practicing In dealing with the discourse community formation the network, concept and theory proposed by Emerson (Turner’s The Structure of Sociological Theory, p: 289), was taken to advantage since exchange happens in networked individuals or groups on utilitarian terms and they form identifiable relational structures. The researcher combined exchange network and community formation together that help trace the new structure beyond settled communities.

In addition Swales John and Deanna Mascle's definition of Discourse Community given under the concepts of research was utilized. To repeat, the discourse community was defined as "a group of people who speak the same language or in other words people who share an interest in certain topics, share a body of knowledge about those topics, and possesses a common vocabulary for discussing those topics". It is to make it clear that the Discourse community in this research does not mean the community of high intellectual exchange-community but this is the community of ordinary people or normal people, however educated, incorporating members in a discussing, mutually consulting group with some degree of voluntarisms' Swales and Deanna (1990).

TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY: FEATURES

The features described below served as ideals of community called „traditional community“ that happened in old time periods of history of societies. The Sociologists McIver (1937), Smelser (1993), Hort & Hunt (1984) and many others have consolidated the features of such communities. These features in summarized ways are thus:

- (i) Locale-bound/small sized grouping in village & town settlements
- (ii) Permanent co-living and interdependence with lesser mobility
- (iii) Multiple purpose grouping
- (iv) Personal integration of higher degree
- (v) With totality of behavioral culture
- (vi) Shared social and cultural values
- (vii) Self sufficiency
- (viii) Arranged through division of labour as well
- (ix) Tied through kinship and family

But these communities are succeeding in squeezes for many factors effective. The conditions, which allowed appearing the next new mode of community life, were consistent to some master processes.

THE MODERN ERA COMMUNITY: FEATURES

Smelser (1993) and Horton & Hunt (1984) asserted that Modern time communities has appeared over Traditional communities as time passed. And, urbanization and industrialization, historically emerged, with the separate set of conditions in last century that paved the way for Modern communities or modern era communities established with these following features:

- (i) Comparatively Larger population
- (ii) Structurally differentiated with introduction of external economic and social processes
- (iii) Loosely integrated with presence of many social worlds and world views
- (iv) Growth of sub-cultures
- (v) Localized but without single loci of control
- (vi) Communication restricted but possible

THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY: THE NETWORKED OR WIRED COMMUNITY:

The recent form of community is discourse community- being the previous types of communities in transition. Being pushed by unprecedented expansion of communication and transport and moulding of information society led emerged a thin form of community. Communication based on certain knowledge area. Here is attempted the yoga discourse community as specific and less in setting.

What Type of Thing One Gets in Exchange of the Information and Knowledge?

In commodity -exchange, the exchange partners exchange direct utility items generally in the form of material either through hand over- taking of these items or promise to give these things in exchange. This exchange shows concrete form of utilitarian exchange as „happened“ between the partners interested in. But in the context of health discourse, the exchange partners seek and/or give information to others on health and illness and depict again the useful exchange. However this non- commercial part of this neo-utilitarian exchange may be one-sided affair, in contrast of simple term of traditional exchange. Of course, exchange is not without exchange of any kind of utility, not commercial/economic exchange or in

exchanging information. In both cases of exchange a bilateral relation may be there. But the exchange in lieu of appreciation or recognition that satisfy ego of the passive partner of exchange is a reality.

If to consider the age of Post-modernity, knowledge became akin to commodity since knowledge is turned into economic gains by relevant partners. The vast area of knowledge processing in current time, world over, has provided to the knowledge/information as produced like a commodity in factory. And exchange became a part of knowledge industry where research help create knowledge/information. In the context of health information exchange among the members known to each other, turned than now a part of new community formed after a discourse circulation through communication process where respondents are giver and receivers, as are visible in other kind of exchanges. But the nature of this exchange is different in many terms i.e. in terms of Nature of item exchange, the nature and setting of exchange partners and the communication process involved.

DISCUSSION

The conventional communities get matured through a lengthier time spend and after co-living with many-many purposes within informal relationships. These communities show series of relationship after and after successive generations bur discourse communities are crystallized after socialization in a discourse. The discourse particular can emerge anytime for uncertain time. Hence such communities become matters of contemporarily and present tense sustainment. In traditional communities co-living, co-residing has been a prominent feature but in the discourse communities developing now, can be substantiated to happen through the acts like co-travelling to Yoga health.

A community is an integrated whole, conventionally speaking, where members are mutually inclusive for many-many purposes related to total living in a localized community with unlimited liabilities. But the community organized around a discourse is specific in purposes without being formal as happened in the case of laity of a group. Even though the discourse followers show both tendencies i.e. discussing only health /illness matters as well as other general interest matters. This makes a distinguishing character of these new communities retaining limited and specific reciprocities and the broader sharing of ideas and opinions.

The intensive and speedy transport facilities and communication the phase of local community -contact partially is over. Now, the contacts extend above and outside the little/village communities and the urban locations. The idea here was to know the contact range, which the respondents make in their needs of consultation, and seeking information or sharing the ideas regarding health and illness, seeking yoga/pranayam medical remedies.

In the content of Discourse community there is an association among members sharing the same discourse is here but the membership of this new community is over the caste structure of a community, which India embraces. The membership in traditional community is of basic nature which allows other associational forms built are with resistance but the nature of discourse membership is with limited purpose this caste resistance seems limited of lesser.

The yoga discourse community is more voluntaristic than conventional community since conventional communities have compulsive bonds among members localized in definite territory.

CONCLUSION

The discourse community is free from locational character, to be self sufficient, to be multipurpose and face-to-face interaction as well. This shows a departure from traditional community features but some on other counts it is a community since members have the same goals to achieve or the similar purpose.

The middle class, educated mostly the male members and with some communicational use make the community but their health needs divert them to opt cheaper and simpler method of health as they belong to middle level category. This discourse binds people over and extra to their traditional groupings like caste, religion, and territory hence discourse is capable of associating the people on utilitarian and ideological lines. And overall this is delocalization of groupings among people. The discourse community is free from locational character, to be self sufficient, to be multipurpose and face-to-face interaction as

well. This shows a departure from traditional community features but some own other counts it is a community since members are associates, having common interest, reciprocal bonds, happen in a geography, the area we selected, and networked in exchange, of course, of abstract things. All these constitute community-retaining features of traditionally defined community.

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