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P. G. SEM - III  
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Unit -II

## **SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN INSECTS**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

Insects are the most diverse group of animals we know of, with over 900,000 species discovered so far. Their habitats, behaviours and ways of living are equally diverse. In insects social life has evolved only in two orders, namely, **Isoptera (termites) and Hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants)** which make a nest and live in colonies of thousands of individuals that practice division of labour and social interaction.

**Social insects** are the **ants, bees, wasps, and termites** that have organized societies. They have one or a few females responsible for all the egg laying, while other members of the colony (usually sterile females) gather food and do other tasks. Dipterans are associated with social insects as scavengers, predators, parasitoids, and parasites. In insects social life has achieved the status of social organization. The interactions between individuals of the same species which are initiated by such difference in structure that enforce them to lead colonial life with division of labour are known as **“social organisation”**.

**DEFINITION** : **Social behaviour** is **behaviour** among two or more organisms within the same species. All these **Social insects** exhibit certain complex **behaviour** that involves cooperation in building nest, protecting against enemies or taking care of offspring. They live in complex societies and are referred to as eusocial.

**The honey bees, ants and termites (below) are eusocial, they always live together in colony.**



**A) A colony of Honey Bees.**



**B) A colony of Ants.**



C.) A colony of Termites.

### Advantages of social insects :

Living in a colony provide them strength, as there strength in numbers.

- Work together to find food and other resources and use them more efficiently.
- Communicate their findings to others in the community or colony.
- Defend their home and resources at the time of danger.
- Outcompete other insects or animals for territory and food.
- Quickly construct shelter and expand it accordingly.
- Distribution of work.
- Provide parental care to their offspring.

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