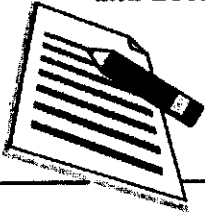# 19

SOCIALIZATION AS A PROCESS OF LEARNING

*E*very society has its own codes of conduct, rules and regulations, and norms and values. You must have understood by now that every culture clearly demarcates the desirable and undesirable behaviour in different social contexts. How should you behave as a son or daughter, as brother or sister, as nephew or niece, as host or guest and as friend, are all laid down by the culture to which you belong. Every culture has its own ways of handling these issues. For example, we show respect to elders by touching their feet, greet them with folded hands and simply bowing down our heads before them. While seeking blessings, the daughters in Bengal are supposed to touch the feet of their parents whereas daughters in Uttar Pradesh are not supposed to touch their feet in similar circumstances. Where they are regarded as *Devi* (Goddess) Laxmi. Further, they are offered to another family in the form of *kanya dan (gift of a virgin)*. There are several such rules, which differ from society to society. Thus, it is clear that an individual should be aware of such social norms and cultural expectations so that he could carry out his activities in accordance with the culturally laid down practices. In this lesson, we will study about the process of socialization.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

*   explain the concept and meaning of socialization;
*   describe its inter-relationship with a) enculturation b) assimilation;
*   state the different agents of socialization;
*   describe the elements of socialization;

- understand the role of socialization in personality development; and
- explain the process of socialization in the context of different Indian communities.

19.1 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF SOCIALISATION

When a child is born it is merely an organism, a *"jiva"* and through the process of socialization, it becomes *purusha* or *stri* in other words an individual. The culture that a family, community and society inculcates in an individual makes him *manushya* (or human being). The child responds to the forces around it, both human and physical objects. It can be called a process of growing up in a society which a child acquires through its growth in age and is also influenced by cultural norms, traditions, values and different cultural patterns of the group to which it belongs. In this process, the child imbibes the cultural patterns, learns to perform its individual and social roles. In this way, the child makes efforts to adjust himself to the social order. **Socialization is a comprehensive and endless process, which continues throughout the life of an individual.**

> Socialization is a process of owning, adopting and initiating the newborn, stage by stage in the family, community and society. This process functions at two different levels: one within the infant himself which is called internalization (of the objects around him) and the other from outside, that is, at the level which includes parents, other family members and peers etc.

19.1.1 Relationship between Assimilation and Socialization

The process of learning and instilling the values and socially approved ways of behaviour is known as socialization.

Members of a society are required to behave in ways that are in accordance with the values of the group. The process of assimilation of newcomers enables to achieve this end. The new comers are not immigrants from other societies or sub-cultures of the same society but are new born babies. The newborn infant has certain needs like those for food and warmth which his his mother mainly satisfies. The child depends upon her and "identifies oneself" with her emotionally. It is believed by some that the child is aware of his mother even before he is aware of himself. The mother and the child at first have a common identity. The mother is "internalised" by the infant with the satisfaction of food and other bodily needs. In due course, the child differentiates himself from his mother. He is then faced with the problem of integrating his self and the mother into a social system. In this

way, role system comes into existence. Therefore, the child learns to differentiate himself from his mother. Later, it is believed that the child repeats the process of assimilation with his father as well. Thus, the child differentiates between father as a person from his mother and then integrates father to the social system in a new enlarged way, which takes into account not only fathers' relationship to him, but to the mother also. In this way, the relationship between socialization and assimilation is established.

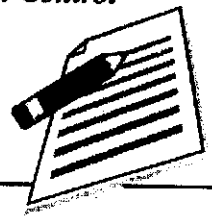## 19.1.2 Enculturation and Socialization

Enculturation refers to learning of cultural patterns from one generation to the next. All the while, new patterns are continuously added. Thus, enculturation ensures the processes of cultural continuity along with change in the society. Enculturation could take place either consciously or unconsciously or both ways. In this situation, the older generation invites or induces and compels the members of succeeding generations to adopt their ways of thinking and behaving. Thus, enculturation is based on the authority of the older generations to ensure that the younger generations do not adopt the cultural practices of other groups. In this way, the elders take full care that the existing values are imbibed by the new comers so that these values are further strengthened and continued.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1
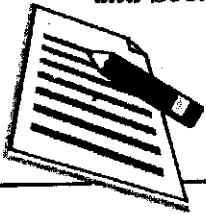
Tick mark the correct answer

1. The process of socialization is a _____ process.

    (i) temporary

    (ii) short Period

    (iii) discontinuous

    (iv) lifelong Process

2. The process of socialization is called the process of _____ in a society.

    (i) adjustment

    (ii) assimilation

    (iii) learning

    (iv) growing

3. . The process of socialization helps to maintain _____.

(i) emotional stability

(ii) common identity

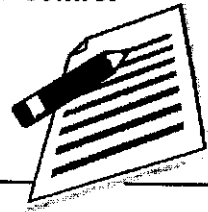(iii) self-identity

(iv) social order

19.2 AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

The agents of socialization help the process of learning. This learning is the result of authoritarian and egalitarian forces. The authoritarian forces are those which have an authority over the child. These include the parents, the family, the cultural factors and the prescriptions of law. The egalitarian forces include the peer group, the playmates, friends and associates. These agents of socialization function as per the recognized patterns laid down by the society for conformity and deviation, or reward and punishment.

The main aim of socialization is to make the child learn and to make him conform to the established norms and behaviour patterns. The growing child is brought up in the given conditions. One learns the forms of conduct and behaviour in accordance with the accepted social practices, norms and values. It is the first step towards culturisation of the child when he learns to identify himself with the existing environment. The socializing agents condemn deviant action and behaviour of the child, but do not govern the later behaviour. The deviant behaviour of the child can not be ruled out.

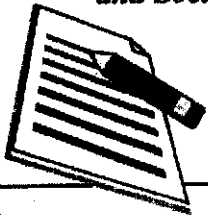Fig -1: *A Sikh child is learning to wear turban from his father*

19.2.1 Family

A child is born dependent and helpless. He has various biological and psychological attributes. He has to depend on his parents for physical and mental needs. The mother fulfills all these needs of the infant. We have discussed earlier that the child is emotionally attached to his mother first and later to his father. He identifies the relationship with his mother and father and grandparends and gradually learns to differentiate among all.

After the parents, the child comes close to his siblings, who sometimes take care, fondle and express their love and affection towards him. In this way, he integrates his siblings into a new and an enlarged social system.

Thus, the child comes in contact with an increasing number of family members and imitates their actions and behaviour patterns through different forms of responses such as anger, screaming, smiles and through movements of arms, hands and legs, etc. These special gestures help him to associate and integrate himself with his family. The child internalizes the knowledge about the members of the family. In this way, the child starts his life with learning in presence of his/her mother, father and other family members. Gradually, this process of social relationships widens if he lives in an extended family. Thus, the child acquires knowledge, behaviour, manners and internalizes all these patterns and learns to adjust or conform to the norms of the family.

19.2.2 Neighbourhood

The locality and village constitute the neighbourhood in which a child grows up. He is socialised in the physical and social environment of the neighbourhood. He plays with elder siblings, other children of the locality/village and thus, acquires knowledge about physical and social objects available in his neighbourhood. He learns about the nature, characteristics and usefulness of these objects operating in the neighbourhood. He tries to adjust himself in different situations and also with the members of different castes, communities, religious and other occupational groups. In this way, he learns to differentiate between different qualities possessed by different individual members and also the communities which bind them. During his interaction with both physical and social neighbourhood, he learns about the various ways of making a living, different types of occupations and the role of physical environment in providing facilities for adoption of these occupations. He becomes familiar with the process of inter-dependence in the locality/village and the neighbourhood among the different sections of the group. He also visualises the ways and means in which the village solidarity is maintained. He also learns to act and behave in conformity to the different groups to which he belongs and also to their norms and values. He acquires insight into the behaviour of others and in

Notes

this process, he develops an understanding of his own self. Here, the process of socialization inculcates discipline, orderly behaviour, and furnishes skills.

19.2.3 School/Institution

Schools and educational institutions are important agents of socialization. They provide learning situations and environment to the child which impart discipline and inculcate certain qualities which enable him to develop his personality. This way he learns to discover his own needs and needs of the group to which he belongs. Thus, he learns to conform to the norms set by the school and other institutions.

Education plays an important role in the development of the human behaviour. After family, it is the class room, the peer group, and the teachers who exercise influence on a child. Education gives moral, intellectual and social insight to the individual. It links one to one's heritage and sets a perspective before him.

The norms rooted in these institutions provide standards of behaviour and are regulatory in character. They condition our social action. Violation of the norms may lead to social ridicule, boycott and even more severe punishment.
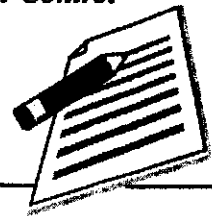
19.2.4 Society

We live in society. All our actions and behaviour are governed by different rules and regulations. No one can act independently with complete disregard to society and social patterns of life. The action and behaviour should commensurate with traditions, customs and norms and values prescribed by the society. If individuals living in a society follow the norms as are applicable and act strictly in accordance with that they are rewarded, else they are punished for their deviant behaviour.

19.2.5 Reward and Punishment

The process of socialization also involves reward and punishment for the better performance and reinforcement of competitive sense in the child.

Reward and punishment operate as important agents of socialization. In their operation, there is a basic difference and they serve different purposes. Man is a cultured animal and communicates largely through symbols. If possible, human beings are likely to use symbolic sanctions resorting to other types of sanction only if the symbolic approach fails. Thus, pointing to the rod at first may serve a better purpose than using it; similarly, an appreciative smile may at times serve purposes more than the reward. Punishment is used mostly as a principal form of social control and against those who disturb the order. Reward and punishment both have a role, but variant and different.
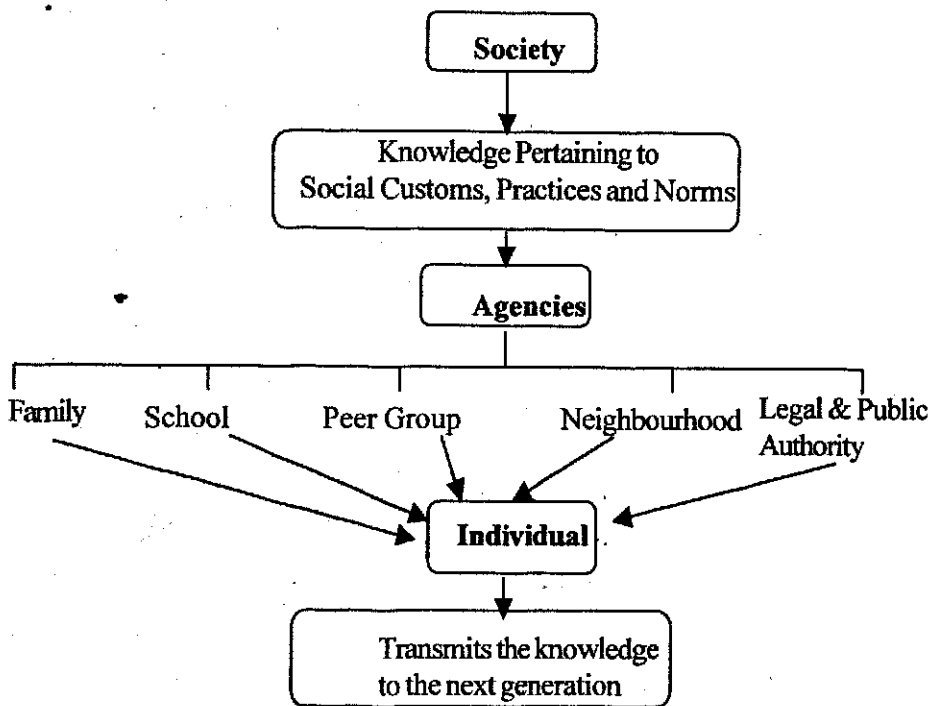
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                          │   Society    │
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              ┌────────────────────────────────────┐
              │      Knowledge Pertaining to        │
              │ Social Customs, Practices and Norms │
              └────────────────────────────────────┘
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                          │   Agencies   │
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  Family      School    Peer Group   Neighbourhood   Legal & Public
                                                       Authority
     └──────────┴──────────┐   │   ┌──────────────────┘
                           ▼   ▼   ▼
                       ┌──────────────┐
                       │  Individual  │◄──────
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                   │  to the next generation│
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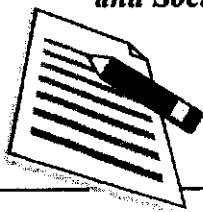
Fig.1 : *The Mechanism of Socialization*

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.2

State true or false against each statement.

(i) The main aim of socialization is to make the child learn the established norms and behaviour.

(ii) Schools and educational institutions are not important agents of socializations.

(iii) All our actions and behaviour are governed by different rules and regulations of the society.

(iv) Reward and punishment operate as important agents of socialization and social control.

19.3 ELEMENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

Communication is one of the basic elements of socialization. It is through the communication skills that a child learns to communicate his feelings and emotions to others. It is through the process of communication that learning occurs.

Role identification and role performance are the other elements of socialization. Socialization enables the child to perform certain social roles effectively. Thus, it influences the social behaviour of the child to perform his role in consonance with the approved social norms and values laid down by the society.

Culture is the an element of socialization, which is passed on from one generation to the next. An organised society is built up by means of social organisation and is transmitted from one generation to another by the process of learning. The values of a society and the ways of doing and thinking that are considered right and proper are learnt by the young child. Socialization constitutes these learning processes.

19.4 ROLE OF SOCIALIZATION IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL

It is a common belief that most of the personality traits are acquired by the child during the age of 3 to 8 years. It is the most crucial period in the life of an individual as the foundations for character and personality are laid down during this period. It has already been discussed that the child internalizes the affection and love, emotions and sentiments and the various roles played during his growth by the mother, father and siblings. A role is set of socially expected behaviour and for every role, there is corresponding status and set of rights and duties. The "expressive" role centered round affection and "instrumental" role organised around discipline and the provision of livelihood or earner of bread are internalized by the child in his role performance. In course of games, the boy plays the role of the head of the family having a job which takes him to work in the morning and returns home in the evening as his father does. Similarly, a girl performs the role of her mother.

The number and nature of roles with which the growing child becomes familiar increases further when he plays with his siblings and other family members and goes to the school. His role is identified by his nature and the extent of his participation in the family and the school including peer groups, teachers, headmasters, community members, villagers, and so on. He comes across various practices and occupations of the family and of others in the village, and community. Due to his association with the occupation of his father, he learns about the different stages of that particular occupation. He acquires different skills and basic ideologies and principles related to that occupation. He assists his father and aims to become an effective and efficient worker. In this way, he becomes a responsible member of the family, community, society and nation while performing different roles expected of him at different levels and situations.

Childhood socialization plays a prime role. If a child socializes, he will be able to identify different roles expected of him and will also be instrumental in performing the expected roles.

In the process of role taking, the person who develops a concept of individual and personal identity ego and self learns to introspect. He establishes his own identity and image, position and status as a member of the family, community and society.

It is evident from above that socialization provides learning opportunities to young children which helps them to identify their cultural and social roles and ways to perform these roles. The role performance by growing child reflects the human behaviour in conformity to and in consonance with the approved norms of the group and society.
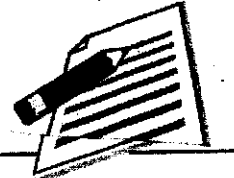
The basic principles of role theory are

(i)   the role: is the unit of culture;

(ii) the position and status: the units of society; and
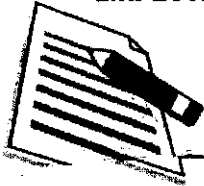
(iii) the self: the unit of personality.

Reciprocal action occurs between persons in terms of roles and there is an interaction of roles and self. Contemporary role theory regards human conduct as the product of the interaction of role and self.

It is true that socialization stresses conformity to certain norms of group, but with some flexibility and selectivity to avoid rigid uniformity of behaviour. However, there are failures in socialization of persons whose behaviour deviates from social norms. First, we need to note that social order is largely maintained by internalization of social norms and is transmitted from the older generation to the newer by the learning process. The child learns the values of the society and the ways of doing and thinking that are deemed to be right and proper. In this way, the process of socialization plays an effective role in personality development and character formation of an individual.

The social order is maintained by socialization and not social control . The basic processes involved in socialization and social control are the same, such as praise and blame, or rewards and punishments for behaviour, which are approved or disapproved. In practice, the processes differ on emphasis and degree in two situations.
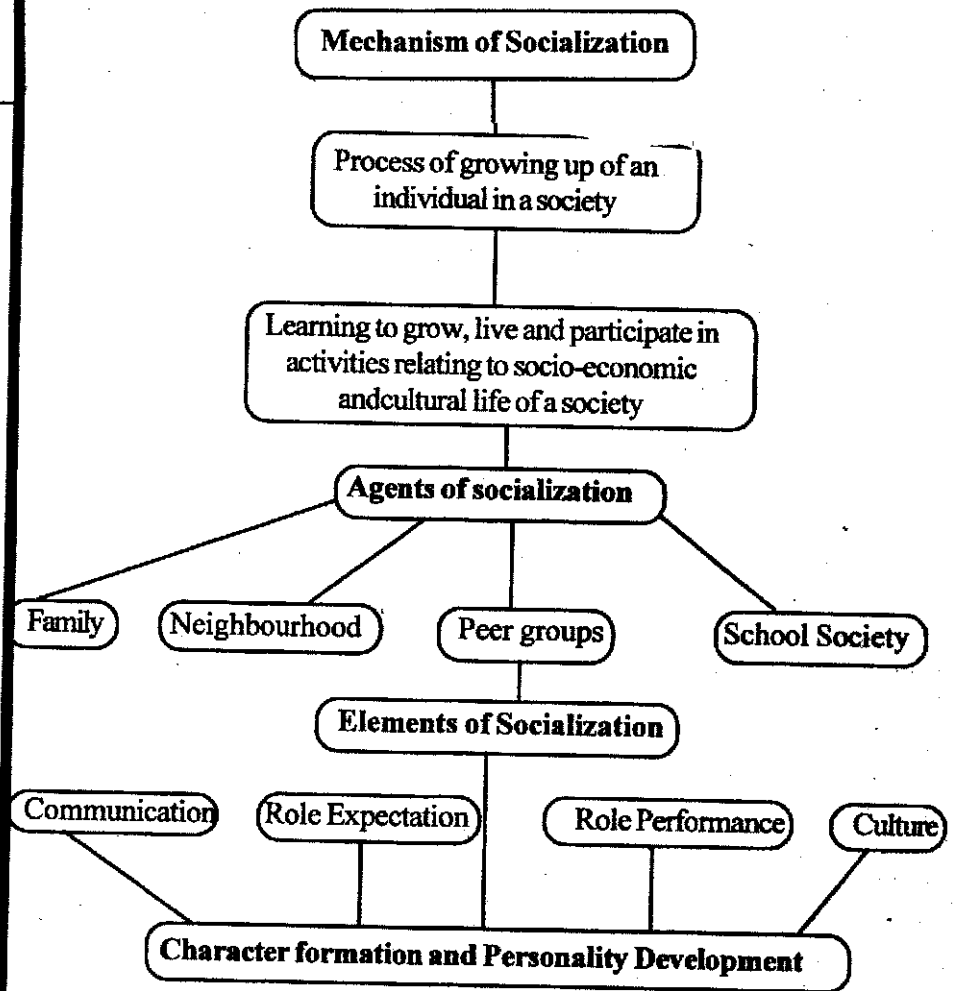
THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION

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            ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            │  Mechanism of Socialization  │
            └──────────────────────────────┘
                         │
            ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            │  Process of growing up of an │
            │    individual in a society   │
            └──────────────────────────────┘
                         │
         ┌────────────────────────────────────┐
         │ Learning to grow, live and participate in │
         │   activities relating to socio-economic   │
         │        andcultural life of a society       │
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            │   Agents of socialization    │
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Family   Neighbourhood   Peer groups   School Society

Elements of Socialization

Communication   Role Expectation   Role Performance   Culture

Character formation and Personality Development
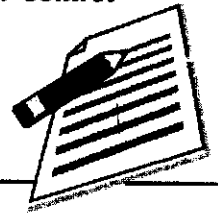
INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.3

1. The agents to socialization help in _____:

   (i) conformity   (ii) deviation

   (iii) learning   (iv) communication

2. The process of socialization regulates the _____.

   (i) society   (ii) human behaviour

   (iii) social control   (iv) cultural heritage

3. Can reward and punishment be considered as agents of socialization ?
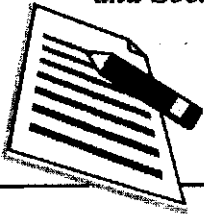
   (i) Yes   (ii) No

4. Name the three basic elements of socialization.

(i) family   (ii) school

(iii) community   (iv) communication

(v) social roles   (vi) culture

5. Most personality traits are acquired by the child during the age of:

i) 1-3 Yrs.   (ii) 3-8 Yrs.

(iii) 9-14 Yrs.   (Iv) 15-20 Yrs.

6. The process of socialization helps in establishing his _____ identity.

(i) group   (ii) self

(iii) community   (iv) social

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Socialization is a social process.

- It helps the child to grow and develop physically and mentally. With growth in his age, the mental and physical development take place.

- Socialization helps the child to acquire and internalize the objects around him and norms and sanctions prescribed by the customs and practices, culture and traditions.

- The process of socialization is a life-long process, which continues from cradle to grave and begins even during prenatal period.

- It brings to limelight the new situation which requires attention and generates an atmosphere of expectation, hopefulness and welcome to the springing life.

- The agents of socialization are parents, family, schools neighbourhood, cultural factors, social norms and values of society. These are authoritarian forces.

- The egalitarian forces include the playmates, friends and associates.

- The main aim of socialization is to make the child learn and to make him conform to the established norms and behaviour.

- The basic elements of socialization are communication, role identification and role performance, and culture in which the child is reared up.

- These elements regulate the behaviour of the child in consonance with the approved norms and values. Thus, the process of socialization largely plays a dominant role in character formation and personality development of the child.

- Socialization stresses conformity to certain norms of the group, however at times deviations take place that results in failures in socialization.

Notes

- The child learns the values of the society and ways of doing and thinking are transmitted from one generation to the next.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain the concept and meaning of socialization.

2. Elucidate the relationship between assimilation, enculturation and socialization.

3. What are the different agents of socialization?

4. Explain the basic elements of socialization with illustrations.

5. Socialization plays an important role in personality development of an individual. Discuss.

GLOSSSARY

Internalization	:	Unconscious assimilation of information or to make attitude, behaviour, etc., a part of one's nature by learning.
Agents	:	Persons or groups that produce an effect or the persons or groups who facilitate the process of socialization.
Role-identification	:	Orienting oneself in accordance with the behavoiur of the other, or identifying oneself with the other's role

ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

19.1

1 - (iv)	2- (ii)	3 - (iv)

19.2

(i) - T	(ii) - F	(iii) - T	(iv) - T

19.3

1 - (iii)	2 - (iv)	3 - (i)	4 - (iv, v, vi)
5 - (ii)	6 - (ii)		