

SOCIOLOGY

CHAPTER - 24

SOCIALISATION AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



We learn about the following in this chapter,

- The meaning of socialisation and its importance
- The influence of socialisation on an individual
- Agents of socialisation

Socialisation

Man is a social animal. When his/her offspring takes birth, it is just like any other animal. It evolves into a social being over a period of time. This process of taking birth and slowly evolving into a social individual is known as socialisation.

Socialisation is universal. It goes on throughout a person's lifetime. Animals follow only their basic instincts. There is no variety in their behaviour. They have a limited capacity for learning. But man is not like them. The instincts that are inborn in him/her and the culture around him/her influence them immensely. He utilises the natural capability for learning in a suitable manner. He attempts to adjust to his environment and situations, and live in a harmonious manner. He tries to follow the cultural aspects of his society like the prevailing traditions, customs and moral principles. He assimilates them in his social behavior. All this is enabled through socialisation. Hence, socialisation is a unique feature of man.

The new-born infant is not capable of participating actively in society. Its mind cannot be understood by us. However, we do learn that the baby has no interest in controlling its bodily movements. It has not yet learnt to talk about its body or to express its desires. It is not aware of itself yet. Gradually, the baby goes on developing its relationships in society and learning about itself. The learning which motivates the child to participate in society and gives it capability to do so is known as socialisation. Culture is the result of what is learnt through socialisation.

The importance and functions of socialisation

- It makes man a member of a group
- It enables development of the personality
- It inculcates discipline in life
- It provides opportunity for the learning and assimilation of various skills
- It helps to cultivate the right kind of ambitions
- It reduces the gap in society
- It provides opportunity for shaping a bright future
- It is helpful in perpetuation of culture
- It provides support to the social system.

The agents of socialisation : Two kinds of influences can be identified among the agents responsible for socialisation. Firstly, age, experience and the influence of elders. Secondly, the influence of peers. Parents, teachers, elders and officials can be included in the first group. Friends and peers can be included in the second group. On the basis of this, we can identify the following agents of socialisation:

1. **Family :** The role of the family is very important in a child's socialisation. The parents are the direct blood relatives of the child. The saying that the mother is the first teacher to the child and the family the first school of the child is literally true. The words, behavior, activities, and transactions of the parents have a deep impact on the moral and emotional growth of the child. The child learns its first lesson in love, affection, trust, patience, kindness, co-operation and other values at home. The praise of its parents stimulates and encourages its activities. When it errs, punishment by the parents brings it back onto the right path. As the parents are senior to children in age, experience and power, children behave in an obedient manner. They are

Activity :

List out the activities of grand mother, father, mother, brother, sister, sister-in-law in your family.

influenced by the intimacy with their parents. The minds of the children which are like small buds, blossom fresh and fragrant under the influence of socialisation.

2. **Peers** : Peers, playmates and friends form a very important factor of socialisation. This relationship is based on co-operation and mutual adjustment. They are mostly of the same age. As a result, the child learns from its peers what it cannot learn from its parents and teachers. This kind of knowledge is important from the view point of society.
3. **Religion** : Religion also plays an important role in socialisation. Religion provides a foundation of ideals to social life. It preaches a life of morality. Children observe parents, elders and relatives visiting places of worship. They participate in poojas, festivals, fairs and other religious celebrations. They learn religious practices. Through these, they develop an interest in social service, charity etc. and enable social welfare.
4. **School** : The school occupies an important place in the process of socialisation of the child. The child gets influenced by its teachers and friends in addition to the influence of education. Through education, the child's behavior, knowledge, morality and attitude are shaped. The child's innate abilities and talents get exposure. By expanding the horizon of life, education prepares the children for the future. The role of teachers is very significant in the social development of the child. At that age, they are more influenced by their teachers. The good behavior, noble thinking and sense of equality expressed in the teachers' behavior make the children imbibe love, trust, patience, kindheartedness and other values of life. Teachers should encourage children take part in extra-curricular and creative activities. The syllabus should include vocational training, sex education, spiritual education, physical



education, life skills etc. When the child learns these aspects, its socialisation is complete.

5. Mass Media : In today's modern society, mass media play a vital role. Television, movies, newspapers, periodicals, dramas, radio and other media make use of literature on a large scale. Advertisements, radio programmes, stories, poems, novels, dramas, dance, music, posters, quotations from great men, proverbs and words of wisdom influence children. The mass media can be used effectively through the news reports, quiz programs, introduction of great personalities, interviews, debates, travel reports and investigations. Programmes of educational importance have a direct bearing on the personality and good conduct of the child. The adolescent and the youth are moving away from values and culture.

6. Neighbourhood : The people living in houses close to the child's house form the neighbourhood. It is a small group having the characteristics of a community. The neighbourhood is a small group. People have mutual relations. They render various services to the people of their area. The role of neighbourhood is seen in both villages and cities. But the nature and type of neighbourhood is different. The role of neighbourhood is very significant in villages. Neighbours share one another's happiness and sorrow, and live like members of the same family. They interact with each other with regard to their tastes, religious functions, marriages and other events. In villages we see people solely depending on their neighbours in every difficult situation. But such trust and confidence in the neighbourhood cannot be seen in cities. Normally, in cities, neighbours are identified as individuals rather than our own people.

Think it over :

In the background of socialization, think about the effectiveness of your role in the school.

Activity :

Analyse the relationship of your family with neighbourhood

Sex and socialization : As already described, socialisation is essential for every human being. Although all human beings become social beings through socialisation, the processes of socialisation are not the same in every family. Parents' customs, educational status, ambitions, interests and priorities influence the process of socialisation. In the process of socialisation, with or without their knowledge, parents teach their sons and daughters customs and morals in different ways. For ex: There is a difference in the treatment of a boy coming home late after playing and a girl's coming home late. The boy is treated with kind words whereas the girl is admonished for her delay. She is asked to reach home before dark. Especially in India, daughters are expected to assist the mother in cooking whereas this is not expected of sons. In the same manner, daughters are given a musical instrument while sons are given sports materials. In this manner, the process of socialisation goes on in different ways based on the gender of the child. This difference in treatment is called gender discrimination.

In the modern complex society, the status of women is undergoing remarkable change. It varies from time to time and nation to nation. In India, nationalistic and democratic awareness, new economic system and modern education have liberated women and given a new dimension to their status. The positions which were enjoyed only by men are now being made available to women. However, the division of labour according to the gender continues even today. Nowadays, women are slowly getting opportunities in strenuous jobs like mining, steel factories, digging tunnels and excavating wealth from the ocean depths. Women are entering fields like medicine, judiciary, doctoral research, industrial work, military service and production of ammunition.

After independence, the principle of equality and the decisions taken by the Indian government for education of women, specific programmes, economic development, urbanisation and the changes in the attitude of society have enabled removal of gender inequality.

Activity :

Collect the information about special achievements by women.

EXERCISES

I. Fill in the blanks with suitable words.

1. The process of evolution of man as a social being is called _____.
2. Mother is the child's first _____.
3. The tender minds of children blossom through _____.

II. Discuss in group and answer the following questions.

1. Explain the role of peers in socialisation.
2. What are the values a child learns in a family atmosphere?
3. What is the role of religion in socialisation?
4. Write a paragraph on the importance of socialisation.
5. Explain the role of the school in the process of socialisation.
6. How do the mass media work as an agent of socialisation in the modern society?

III. Activities :

1. Have an essay competition on 'The role of mass media in the building of society'.
2. Collect articles from newspapers on socialisation.

IV. Project :

Collect information about the women of Karnataka who have great achievements to their credit.

