

B.A. PART-I(SOCIOLOGY)
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Topic- Agencies of Socialization
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Agencies of Socialization

➤ **Objectives:**

- To know about the agencies of Socialization.

➤ **Introduction:**

The socialization that we receive in childhood has a lasting effect on our ability to interact with others in society. How do we learn to interact with other people? **Socialization** is a lifelong process during which we learn about social expectations and how to interact with other people. Nearly all of the behavior that we consider to be 'human nature' is actually learned through socialization. And, it is during socialization that we learn how to walk, talk, and feed ourselves, about behavioral norms that help us fit in to our society, and so much more.

Socialization occurs throughout our life, but some of the most important socialization occurs in childhood. So, let's talk about the most influential agents of socialization:-

- 1) **FAMILY**-The child's first world is that of his family. It is a world in itself, in which the child learns to live, to move and to have his being. Within it, not only the biological tasks of birth, protection and feeding take place, but also develop those first and intimate associations with persons of different ages and sexes which form the basis of the child's personality development.

The family is the primary agency of socialisation. It is here that the child develops an initial sense of self and habit-training—eating, sleeping etc. To a very large extent, the indoctrination of the child, whether in primitive or modern complex society, occurs within the circle of the primary family group. The child's first human relationships are with the immediate members of his family—mother or nurse, siblings, father and other close relatives.

Here, he experiences love, cooperation, authority, direction and protection. Language (a particular dialect) is also learnt from family in childhood. People's perceptions of behaviour appropriate of their sex are the result of socialisation and major part of this is learnt in the family. As the primary agents of childhood socialisation, parents play a critical role in guiding children into their gender roles deemed appropriate in a society. They continue to teach gender role behaviour either consciously or unconsciously, throughout childhood.

Families also teach children values they will hold throughout life. They frequently adopt their parents' attitudes not only about work but also about the importance of education, patriotism and religion.

2) **Neighborhoods-** Neighborhood can be said to be a local social unit where there is constant interaction among people living near one another or people of the same locality. In such spatial units, face to face interactions frequently take place. In this sense they are local social units where children grow up. You may observe diverse set of people in your neighborhood who differ in caste, class or religion or occupation. By interacting with such diverse set of people, you may be exposed to various customs and practices; various occupations that people pursue; the skills required for such occupations and also the qualities possessed by those members. The growing child may also imbibe values of discipline and orderly behaviour. Interactions are at both physical and social environment wherein children get easily affected. If the child is surrounded by people who are warm and cooperative, it will get definitely transmitted to him/her. On the other hand if the locality is peopled by aggressive and violent group, it is possible that such children may learn unsocial or anti-social behaviors'.

3) **SCHOOL-**After family the educational institutions take over the charge of socialization. In some societies (simple non-literate societies), socialization takes place almost entirely within the family but in highly complex societies children are also socialized by the educational system. Schools not only teach reading, writing and other basic skills, they also teach students to develop themselves, to discipline themselves, to cooperate with others, to obey rules and to test their achievements through competition.

Schools teach sets of expectations about the work, profession or occupations they will follow when they mature. Schools have the formal responsibility of imparting knowledge in those disciplines which are most central to adult functioning in our society. It has been said that learning at home is on a personal, emotional level, whereas learning at school is basically intellectual.

4) **PEER GROUP-**Besides the world of family and school fellows, the peer group (the people of their own age and similar social status) and playmates highly influence the process of socialization. In the peer group, the young child learns to conform to the accepted ways of a group and to appreciate the fact that social life is based on rules. Peer group becomes significant others in the terminology of G.H. Mead for the young child. Peer group socialization has been increasing day by day these days.

Young people today spend considerable time with one another outside home and family. Young people living in cities or suburbs and who have access to automobiles spend a great deal of time together away from their families. Studies show that they create their own unique sub-cultures—the college

campus culture, the drug culture, motorcycle cults, athletic group culture etc. Peer groups serve a valuable function by assisting the transition to adult responsibilities.

- 5) **MASS MEDIA**-From early forms of print technology to electronic communication (radio, TV, etc.), the media is playing a central role in shaping the personality of the individuals. Since the last century, technological innovations such as radio, motion pictures, recorded music and television have become important agents of socialisation.

Television, in particular, is a critical force in the socialisation of children almost all over the new world. According to a study conducted in America, the average young person (between the ages of 6 and 18) spends more time watching the 'tube' (15,000 to 16,000 hours) than studying in school. Apart from sleeping, watching television is the most time-consuming activity of young people.

Relative to other agents of socialization discussed above, such as family, peer group and school, TV has certain distinctive characteristics. It permits imitation and role playing but does not encourage more complex forms of learning. Watching TV is a passive experience. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1970) has expressed concern about the 'insidious influence' of TV in encouraging children to forsake human interaction for passive viewing.

- 6) **WORKPLACE**-A fundamental aspect of human socialization involves learning to behave appropriately within an occupation. Occupational socialization cannot be separated from the socialization experience that occurs during childhood and adolescence. We are mostly exposed to occupational roles through observing the work of our parents, of people whom we meet while they are performing their duties, and of people portrayed in the media.

- 7) **THE STATE**-Social scientists have increasingly recognized the importance of the state as an agent of socialisation because of its growing impact on the life cycle. The protective functions, which were previously performed by family members, have steadily been taken over by outside agencies such as hospitals, health clinics and insurance companies. Thus, the state has become a provider of child care, which gives it a new and direct role in the socialisation of infants and young children.

Not only is this, as a citizen, the life of a person greatly influenced by national interests. For example, labor unions and political parties serve as intermediaries between the individual and the state. By regulating the life cycle to some degree, the state shapes the station process by influencing our views of appropriate behaviour at particular ages.

- 8) **RELIGION**-While some religions are informal institutions, here we focus on practices followed by formal institutions. Religion is an important avenue of

socialization for many people. The United States is full of synagogues, temples, churches, mosques, and similar religious communities where people gather to worship and learn. Like other institutions, these places teach participants how to interact with the religion's material culture (like a mezuzah, a prayer rug, or a communion wafer). For some people, important ceremonies related to family structure—like marriage and birth—are connected to religious celebrations. Many religious institutions also uphold gender norms and contribute to their enforcement through socialization. From ceremonial rites of passage that reinforce the family unit to power dynamics that reinforce gender roles, organized religion fosters a shared set of socialized values that are passed on through society.

- **CONCLUSION**-The socialization is the persistent process of familiarizing individuals to the society. Socialization provides an understanding in respect of society and culture in which the individual lives and also helps to form his personality. The institutions that make the individuals familiarize to the society are known as agents of socialization. Amongst them the primary socialization is done by family influences the formation of individual's personality. In addition to it, school, peer groups, mass media, religion, work place and politics influence in forming a particular individual's personality.