

Block

1

UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

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Socialization and Growing Up in Diverse Contexts **22**

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May, 2016

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ISBN-

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Further information on Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110 068.

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi by Director, School of Education, IGNOU.

Lasertypesetted at Graphic Printers, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-91.

Printed at :

BES-121: CHILDHOOD AND GROWING UP

Block 1: Understanding Childhood and Adolescence

Unit 1 Concept of Childhood and Adolescence

Unit 2 Socialization and Growing Up in Diverse Contexts

Unit 3 Agencies of Socialization

Block 2: Growing Up: Infancy to Adulthood

Unit 4 Understanding Growth and Development

Unit 5 Different Perspectives in Child Development

Unit 6 Dimensions of Child Development

Unit 7 Methods of Studying Children and Adolescents

Block 3: Critical Debates in Childhood and Adolescence

Unit 8 Growing Up with Media

Unit 9 Contemporary Issues Affecting Adolescents

Unit 10 Life Skills Education for Adolescents

Unit 11 Child Rights and Legislation

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Course offers an introduction to the study of childhood, child development and adolescence. It aims to make you to think effectively about the developmental process of the child and the interplay of poverty, class and gender in child development. You know that across different cultures, children develop in quite different ways and also describe how development is shaped by the role of culture and the child's immediate environment. It endeavors to examine the concept of childhood and adolescence and the growing up process of children. The main focus of the course would be to enable you to arrive at an understanding of how different socio-political realities construct different childhoods, within children's living contexts and to find various agencies of socialization of a child. The running thread of this course is to understand the growing up process in different contexts.

Course Objectives

After the completion of this Course, you will be able to:

- differentiate the concepts of childhood and adolescence;
- develop understanding of the growing up process of children in diverse contexts;
- examine the different perspectives in child development;
- analyze and reflect upon the impact of developmental contexts such as family life, schooling, peer groups and media on children's development;
- discuss issues of children and adolescents and the need of developing Life Skills Education Programmes.

This Course traces human development from a broader perspective. When we examine theories of human development from a practical point of view, we are faced with a variety of questions: How does growth take place? How do different cultures influence growth? There may be many more questions like this. Such questions will be discussed in this Course. The discussion in this Course will help you ponder over developmental process in different perspectives- biological, life-span, bio-ecological, cognitive, and socio-cultural perspectives.

You will also understand the various problems faced by adolescents and that the transitional period between childhood and adulthood is characterized by physical and psychological changes. A number of social, economic, and individual factors concern parents, teachers and communities alike. Helping children to balance these different factors may reduce situations that could prove problematic. In this Course, you will also understand the need to provide life skills education to children.

There are three blocks in this course which are thematically organized. Each block is divided into units. **Block 1** consists of three units which revolve around the theme '**Understanding Childhood and Adolescence**'. In Unit 1, we discuss the different meanings of childhood and adolescence in different cultures and societies. Unit 2 focuses on socialization and growing up experiences of children in diverse contexts. Unit 3 revisits the concept of socialization and the various agencies of socialization at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Block 2 comprises four units centered on the theme '**Growing Up: Infancy to Adulthood**'. Unit 4 deals with the basic concepts of growth and development. We will discuss here some of the basic issues about how development occurs. In Unit 5 we discuss some of the major perspectives that have influenced our understanding about child development. Unit 6 emphasizes on the dimensions of child development

with regard to physical, emotional, cognitive, moral and psycho-social developments. Unit 7 is devoted to understand the methods used for studying children and adolescents.

Block 3 consists of four units focusing on the theme ‘**Critical Debates in Childhood and Adolescence.**’ Unit 8 focuses on the positive and negative impact of media on children’s lives. Unit 9 introduces you to some of the common problems faced by adolescents through a brief description of each problem followed by the role of school and teachers. Unit 10 covers various life skills needed to cope up in life and the importance of life skills education in schools. Unit 11 runs through a range of legislations related with children’s rights and the role of teachers in protecting children’s rights.

As teachers/prospective teachers, this course will widen your knowledge about child development, stimulate you to know more about debates in childhood and adolescence and the importance of understanding of childhood and adolescence in the teaching-learning process at school level.



INTRODUCTION TO THE BLOCK

In this first block, we discuss how childhood and adolescence are constructed in different cultures and societies. You know that childhood and adolescence are the fundamental stages of human development. ‘Who is a child?’ and ‘who is an adolescent’?, the answers to these questions cannot be given in terms of age criterion. It depends on the nature of the particular society and the way how society brought up children. Throughout the block you will also read about the process of socialization and the various agencies of socialization. An understanding of growing up experiences of children in diverse contexts is also covered in this block.

This block consists of three units.

In **Unit 1** we introduce you to the concept of childhood and adolescence. This Unit will help you understand how a child is different from an adult. After going through this Unit, you will understand the various perspectives of childhood and adolescence in different cultures. By understanding the concept of childhood and adolescence in various cultures you may arrive at the conclusion that childhood and adolescence is basically constructed. How children are viewed varies according to a great many social, economic, political and religious forces that exist at that time and in that place.

Unit 2 helps you understand the concept of socialization and the varied growing up experiences of children in diverse contexts. You know that socialization is a major process in social life. In the growing up experiences, children imbibe the process of socialization. In this Unit, you may also come across with the implications for teachers in understanding the various growing up experiences of children.

Unit 3 makes a revisit on the concept of socialization. In the growing up process the child is associated with various agencies such as family, school, religion, community, media, social networking and so on in the process of socialization. This Unit also throws light on gender socialization in family and among peer group. Besides you can understand the role of teacher as an agent of socialization.

In this way this block will awaken your curiosity to read and understand more on childhood and adolescence in different societies and cultures.

UNIT 1 CONCEPT OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Concept of Childhood
 - 1.3.1 Anthropological perspective of childhood
 - 1.3.2 Sociological perspective of childhood
 - 1.3.3 Historical perspective of childhood
 - 1.3.4 Cultural perspective of childhood
- 1.4 Definition of Child in Different Perspectives
- 1.5 Concept of Adolescence
 - 1.5.1 Adolescence in different cultures
- 1.6 Difference among a Child, an Adolescent and an Adult
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Unit–End Exercises
- 1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.10 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As ‘Concept of Childhood and Adolescence’ is the first Unit of the Course: “Childhood and Growing Up”, it is apt to know the different meanings of childhood and adolescence in different cultures and societies. We all think that we are aware of childhood and adolescence as we experience these stages or we have children of these stages. Though we have passed through the stages of childhood and adolescence, yet we have to address some issues such as-‘Do children across different cultures experience childhood and adolescence similarly? How do urbanization and economic change impact the construction of childhood and adolescence?’

This Unit will help you understand how a child is different from an adult. After going through this Unit, you will understand the various perspectives of childhood and adolescence in different cultures. By understanding the concept of childhood and adolescence in various cultures you may arrive at the conclusion that childhood and adolescence is basically constructed based on the socio-political realities of diverse contexts. As teachers or prospective teachers this unit will help you understand children in your classroom coming from diverse contexts.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- discriminate between childhood and adolescence;
- develop understanding of the term ‘social construction of childhood’;
- identify the various perspectives of childhood;

- explain the concept of adolescence;
- analyze and reflect on how different cultures experience childhood and adolescence; and
- differentiate among a child, an adolescent and an adult.

1.3 CONCEPT OF CHILDHOOD

Children and childhood are familiar terms to us. We all have been through the age when we were called ‘**children**’ and have experienced the phase called ‘**childhood**’. Not only childhood but also we have passed through the stages of adolescence with varied experiences. The word childhood means the state of being a child. Till the end of the twentieth century the idea of childhood as a separate social category had been paid very little attention. According to cultural norms and expectations, the definition of childhood also varies.

As adults, we see children in the same manner and not as unique individuals who have varied experiences, interests, styles of learning, and knowledge. We often force them to be the way we want them to be, which deeply influences children’s development. As teachers or prospective teachers, we need to develop a familiarity with experiences of children, so that we can question our own perceptions about ‘the children we teach’. In this Unit, an attempt has been made to become aware of limitations of our own understandings about children. In order to understand the different experiences, it is fair to consider the variety of perspectives of childhood. Let us first examine the anthropological perspective of childhood.

1.3.1 Anthropological Perspective of Childhood

While examining the anthropological viewpoint, you could see that there are no chronological limits of childhood or biological boundaries. From anthropological viewpoint, childhood can be perceived from five angles. Firstly, children are socialized to learn and perpetuate a set of norms and customs. According to this view, we may treat children as **small adults in the making**, moulded by parents and adults in a community to sustain the culture of a society. Secondly, children’s personalities are understood as natural reactions of the anxieties and cultural aspects in which they grow up with. The emphasis is on how the cultural patterns are internalized and in turn are reproduced in society. Thirdly, childhood socialization is a process by which norms, attitudes, ways of thinking and values of society are acquired by children to enter the next stage of development. This view suggests that child rearing practices are influenced by the geography, history and ecology of a community, which, in turn, shape the personality of a child. Fourthly, childhood is viewed in terms of ‘developmental niche’. The ‘developmental niche’ stands for the framework for examining the cultural structuring of the micro-environment of the child. It also tries to explain the environment in terms of child’s viewpoint and to understand the process of development and acquisition of culture. The child is seen as bringing its own temperament, as well as species-specific potentials, to the developmental niche provided by its culture. The developmental niche is divided into three components as given below:

- i) the physical and social settings in which the child lives (for example, type of house or living space the child has)
- ii) the customs of child care and child rearing (for example, scheduling of activities such as sending children to play schools or showing them TV programmes)

- iii) the psychology of the caretakers (for example, do the care takers believe that a regular sleep schedule is necessary for healthy development).

These three components function together in shaping the developmental experience of a child within the larger culture. Finally, some anthropologists view childhood itself as a cultural construction shaped by forces within as well as outside a single cultural community. Children experience culture within a family through their daily routine of life. Here daily routine consists of going to school, religious practices, play, mealtimes and family visits. Generally, culture enters into the mind of a child through various growing up experiences. The experiences children had in childhood might have impacted their adult life. Here we have to remember that child rearing practices vary from culture to culture and represent an adaptation to different environments. You will study in detail about the growing up experiences of children in various contexts such as in different types of family structures, growing up in discomfort zones and growing up as a girl in Unit 2 titled ‘Socialization and Growing Up in Diverse Contexts’ of this Block. The ways in which children assign meaning to their everyday environments, be they city, rural, suburban or discomfort zones and how they involve in these environments play a major part in shaping children’s lives. In the subsequent paragraphs, we will be referring to the **sociological perspective** of childhood.

1.3.2 Sociological Perspective of Childhood

We understand that there exist variety and diversity in experiences of children across times and societies. Further, there are different conceptions about child and childhood across time, societies and contexts. These are so different that it is difficult to have one idea for child or childhood. Yet, in general as adults, we envision childhood as one category. Such a vision is more of a creation or construction, which is not based on an *empathetic* understanding of experiences of children. It is shaped by a uniform and narrow vision of society, which may have a deep implication on lives of children. This way of looking at children seems to be adults’ **construction of childhood**. We may agree with Mayall’s (1991) argument that ‘children’s lives are lived through childhoods constructed for them by adults’ understanding of childhood and what children are and should be’.

Childhood as a Social Construction

A social construction can be defined as ‘a theoretical perspective that explores the ways in which “reality” is negotiated in everyday life through people’s interactions and through sets of discourses’ (James & James, 2008, p.122). It focuses on culture and context in understanding what happens in society and in constructing knowledge based on those understandings. When we examine the idea of social construction, we have to highlight the following points:

- All ways of understanding are culturally and historically relative;
- Our knowledge about the world is constructed through our daily interactions; and
- There are many possible constructions of the world.

You may notice that when developmental psychologists differentiate children from adults on the basis of ability in a range of domains, social constructionists argue that childhood has more to do with how people define it; thus making childhood a social construction. Our attitude towards childhood is influenced by the dominant belief systems of the society in which we live, and so it may vary across time and culture. We can only begin to understand our views of childhood if we take account of our

own position in a particular social, political and cultural context. The constructed nature of childhood becomes more apparent when we contrast the concepts of childhood that prevailed at different **historical periods** or in different **cultures**. Let us discuss the historical perspective of childhood.

1.3.3 Historical Perspective of Childhood

When we try to know the meaning of child in different societies, it is better to overview the history of the idea of childhood. If one analyses history, one will realize that meaning and description of children varies across time periods in history. A French historian named Philippe Aries, analyzed how children were depicted in history. Using works of art, letters, and many other sources he explored how the meaning of childhood evolved from medieval times onwards to the present. Read the following box.

Philippe Aries wrote that childhood is a very new concept. It did not exist at all in the medieval period. He found that there were no children depicted in paintings of that era. There were only young babies or adults. All those who were not babies were painted in adult dresses, with adult body language, and adult-like expressions. Most young people were apprenticed, became workers in the fields and entered the adult roles at a very early age. Even 'people' around seven years of age were seen as little adults, and not as children.

The medieval cultures lacked the concept of childhood. Childhood is a later historical creation. It came into existence among the rich people (upper class) in the 16th and 17th centuries. It further developed in the 18th century among the upper class. And it finally emerged on the scene in the 20th century in both the upper and lower classes. Once the institution of childhood began to emerge, the situation of the young person began to change in society. First they were named children. A theory of innocence of the child emerged. Children were to be protected from adult reality. The facts of birth, death, sex, tragedy and adult world events were hidden from the child. Children were increasingly segregated by age.

-Philippe Aries (1962), Centuries of Childhood

Another thinker, John Holt, wrote about young people and their place, or lack of place, in modern society. He talked about the institution of modern childhood, the attitude, customs and laws that defined and located children in modern life and determined, to a large degree, what their lives were like, and how we, their elders treated them. He further talked about many ways in which modern childhood seemed to him be bad for most of those who lived within it and how it should and might have changed.

-John Holt (1974), Escape from Childhood

Now you know that there have been different ways in which childhood has been perceived in different times in the history of civilization. For example, children in non-industrial society are treated differently from children in industrial societies which will be discussed in detail in the section 1.5 'Concept of Adolescence'. Therefore, childhood is not a given concept; it is a concept which develops through adults' lenses, and their ways of perceiving children in the society.

1.3.4 Cultural Perspective of Childhood

Variations in our images of childhood can be found not only by going back over time

but also by travelling through the different cultures in the world. In different cultures there is a variation in children's social position and roles. These variations are seen between *rural* and *urban* areas, among *different communities*, and among *different countries*. Let us look at some examples of how children are reared in various cultures.

Observe an **Indian mother** with her baby on her lap. The mother does her best to foster emotional tie by cuddling, smiling, singing and talking, and thus ensure that she is very much the focus of the baby's attention. While looking at **Kaluli mothers** and their babies, we will get a different picture. The Kaluli people are a small society living in the tropical rainforests of Papua New Guinea (close to Australia), and there mother-baby interaction takes a very different form. Mothers hold their babies outwards so that they can see others who are part of their social group. Mothers rarely talk directly to their babies; instead, other people talk to the baby. Why is it so?

As Kaluli people are living in one large long house with no internal walls, the mother-child bond is less significant and children are prepared to be aware of the social community as a whole. Hence they adopted the practice of facing the child outward and not towards the mother.

(Source: Schaffer, H. Rudolph. (2004). *Introducing Child Psychology*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.)

An example of mother-child play session in two societies is given below:

In the course of childhood, a mother in western society tries to develop independent nature among children by providing situations to explore on their own. On the contrary, a Japanese mother socializes the child to become dependent on other members of the group. For example, during play sessions while confronted by a car, a western mother might say: 'This is a car. It has nice wheels. You can play with it.'

A Japanese mother would say: 'Hello chan, It's a vroom vroom. I give it to you. Now give it to me. Yes. Thank you.'

What difference do you observe between these two mother-child play sessions?

The mother in western society gives much importance to teach the child the name of the object and its properties whereas in the second case, the mother wants to teach the child the cultural norms for polite speech and to focus on interpersonal aspects. Another point you can observe is that in western society, mothers join their children in play to foster their cognitive and educational skills whereas in Japanese society, play is merely a means of involving a child in social rituals that will develop mother-child relationship.

(Source: Schaffer, H. Rudolph. (2004). *Introducing Child Psychology*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.)

From the above examples, you might have inferred that child rearing practices are important in shaping the personality of children. Even today there are variations in our images of childhood when we compare different parts of the world with different cultural traditions. What is normal in one society may not be acceptable in another. These differences are due to the rearing practices as how children are talked to, held or played with. Thus we may say that each society sets out to produce children with personality characteristics that fit in with its own values. The social and cultural contexts in which children grow up exert influences in making sense of the social

world of the child. Thus, you may say that there is no single universal definition of childhood. Childhood differs across time, place and culture. In the next section we will discuss the meaning of the concept ‘Child.’

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.
 (b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) “Childhood is a social construction”. Do you agree with this statement? Why?

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1.4 DEFINITION OF CHILD IN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Teachers in schools deal with children belonging to various backgrounds. Some teachers shout at children, some try to talk to them to resolve the matter and some become ignorant. However, to handle children with diverse background is not that simple. This exposes us to the reality that we, as adults or as teachers are not well equipped to understand the classroom contexts. This results in our lack of engagement with children in diverse contexts. Do you think these situations have something to do with how children are placed in the society? Apparently, it may not appear so. In the subsequent paragraphs, we will begin to explore this question.

As adults we feel that we fairly understand childhood and children’s experiences. Let us ask some questions to ourselves. Can we ‘define’ childhood? We all have experienced childhood; would it be possible for us to ‘define’ a child? If you ask these questions to people, most may use some of the following adjectives to describe children:

Children are:
 innocent, God’s gift, pure and truthful, sweet, cute,
 playful, childish, funny, idiot, naughty,
 fragile, protected, soft like potter’s clay, fearful

These are some general perceptions that most of us have about children. If we closely examine these perceptions, we will realize that these do not explain children’s experiences. Some children come from a deprived context, and therefore appear to be having different experiences. Do you think all children, including those coming from better-off families, have same experiences? We may say that it is less likely to be so, but we cannot say anything for sure. This is because every child has different conditions to live in. Since experiences of children are different, it would be incorrect to think of children as one category, and attribute one single ‘definition’ of childhood. It might sound a little unusual to some of us, but there are different and even conflicting perspectives about the meaning of child.

The English word ‘child’ comes from the Teutonic root and from the Gothic word for womb. The English word ‘baby’ is originated from the first sounds made by an infant which sound like “be-be” or “ba-ba”. In English a baby is also referred to as an ‘infant’, which has its roots in defining a person who cannot speak (in = not, fans = speaking).

In Japanese the newborn baby is called 'aka-chan' (aka = red, and chan = title given to children). This is simply because the skin of the baby appears reddish in colour. In the next paragraph, we will discuss how a child is defined on the basis of age criterion, legal point of view, as a labour, and social policy.

- i. **The age criterion:** Most commonly 'age' is a criterion to define child. Generally, child is defined on the basis of age. A human being is considered to be a child from birth till the onset of puberty, that is, the age span from birth to 13 years, in the average child. Childhood in this age span ranges from birth to puberty.

There is a debate around this demarcation of age. Some argue that child comes into existence and the childhood starts, even before the child is born. That is, in the fetal stage itself. Furthermore, some argue that childhood extends till a period one gains all legal rights as 'adults'. That is, unless one is legally an adult, one is a child. In India, this would mean that till 18 years of age one is a child.

- ii. **Legal view: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** defines a child as a human being below the age of 18 years. **The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** considers a child as a person who is in between the age group 0-18 years. While **the Juvenile Justice Act** in India considers persons below 14 years of age to be children, **the Right of Education Act 2009** narrows the definition down to persons between 6 to 14 years. The different articles of Indian Constitution and Acts put various age limits for a child. **Article 21 A** of the Constitution of India says that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children within the ages of 6 and 14. **Article 45** of the Constitution specifies that the State shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6. Under **the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986** a child is a person who has not completed 14 years of age. **The Indian Mines Act** defines children as those below 18 years. While perusing all these acts or articles a uniform age range cannot be seen.

It will be interesting to note that all over the world the age for legal adulthood differs. In India it is 18 years, in Iran it is 15 years, in Scotland it is 16 years, in Japan it is 20 years, and in Egypt it is 21 years. What do you think are the implications of legal age on life? Till one attains legal adulthood, one is a protected citizen. Therefore, children, adolescents or minors, are the responsibility of their guardians and the government. Their food and health, clothing, shelter, education and good life, are responsibilities of the guardians and the government. After attaining the age of adult, one is legally responsible for oneself. One can enter an employment, vote, contest election, marry, file a case, buy property, drive, and the like. However, there are many contradictions within this legal criterion. For example, the legal age of entering into work in India is 14 years. The 'child' lacks right to vote at this age and other adult rights. A person, who has not attained rights as adult, would be more vulnerable in employment. Do you think it is healthy physically and mentally for 14 years old to engage in labour?

- iii. **Child as a labour:** Despite the fact that child labour is illegal, large number of children work in factories (carpet weaving, bidi making, bangle making, cracker factories etc.) at small shops, does domestic chores (cleaning, cooking, taking care of sibling, etc). Many are in situations where they have to engage themselves in begging. Childhood in poverty, and experiences of children in

impoverished contexts, are very different than that in better off situations. Children in such cases are perceived as helping hands in family’s subsistence. Mostly, children in such situations do not live more different than adults.

- iv. **Child in social policy:** In educational policies children are pictured as learners and future citizens of a nation. The responsibility of providing education to children falls upon the adults. Parents spend vast amount of money for the education of children. **Right to Education Act, 2009** ensures that any cost on education, up to 8 years (Class I-VIII) of schooling will be borne by the State. In social welfare policies, children are considered as vulnerable group who are easily subjected to physical punishment, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. In media, children are depicted as sale promoters in advertisements.

In many societies, the term child is used to indicate a kin relationship but also to indicate a state of servitude. Biological determinants were not always taken into account while indicating childhood. In Medieval Europe, infancy was generally considered to occur at birth or at the end of breast-feeding which prolonged up to age of three. The stage of childhood was considered to end at around seven years when an individual attained the competency to perform certain domestic or industrial tasks. The eighteenth-century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau considered childhood occurring between birth and twelve years. Hence, there is no universal definition of child and childhood.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.
 (b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Why is it not possible to give a universal definition of child?

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1.5 CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence, as we know today, has undergone major social and evolutionary transitions like childhood. You might know that ‘adolescence’ as a concept/term was introduced at the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. Before this period, adolescence was not differentiated from childhood. In the introductory part of this Unit, you have read thus: How do urbanization and economic change impact the construction and experience of adolescence? The introduction of the concept/term adolescence is the result of the rapid changes brought about by industrial revolution in society. You could categorize these changes as industrialization, urbanization, institutionalization and immigration. Though we are not going into the details of each category, let us examine the changes brought about by industrialization and how this impact the concept what we call **adolescence**.

Before delving into the details of condition of children and adolescents in industrial societies, we have to address the captivating question- ‘How childhood and

Note: The portion under ‘Definition of Child in Different Perspectives’ is adapted from Unit 9: ‘Childhood’ of the Course BES-001: Understanding the Elementary School Child with minor changes.

adolescence are treated in non-industrial societies?’ In the subsequent paragraph, we ponder over this query. Ruth Benedict argues that in non-industrial societies, children are generally treated differently from that of industrial societies in the following ways:

- Children in non-industrial societies took responsibility at an early age;
- Those children who show obedience to adult authority were placed in less value; and
- The sexual behaviour of children is often viewed differently.

Before the industrial revolution, children and adolescents were considered to be merely miniature adults. They were expected to work within the family household such as in farm fields, carpentry or engaged in other trades at home. Children and adolescents were seen more of an economic liability and less of an asset. In rural areas, they helped in livestock and harvesting; but in the city, they often didn’t work. With the increased mechanization, the demand for skilled workers had increased and necessitated a specialized division of labour. This reduced the usefulness of both children and adolescents as workers. More than that, laws were passed restricting child labour and making schooling compulsory. What changes have happened in society to make childhood and adolescence as a distinct life-stage? You may say that schooling, laws restricting child labour and child protection Acts gave children the stages of childhood and adolescence. By the middle of the 20th century, adolescents were separated from adults and they spent most of their time with peers. After World War II, the enrolment of adolescents who attended schools increased and they delayed their entry into the adult world. Thus, you have understood how urbanization and economic change impact the construction and experience of adolescence.

When we look at the derivation of the term ‘adolescence’, we can see that the term comes from the Latin verb ‘adolescere’ which means ‘to grow up’ or ‘to grow to maturity’. In psychology, adolescence is treated as a stage between childhood and adulthood. In this stage, one has to adapt and adjust childhood behaviours to the adult standards that are recognized in one’s culture. Here, we may refer adolescence not only to biological growth, but also to social growth within a cultural framework. Some may consider puberty as the evidence of reaching adolescence stage. We use **puberty** to denote the time when a child attains physical and sexual maturity. The two-year period that precedes puberty is termed as **pubescence**. It is the period when physiological changes lead to the development of secondary sex characteristics. Adolescence being linked to puberty refers to the transitional period from childhood to adolescence and is different from culture to culture because of the influence of society. Generally, we may divide the stages of adolescence as follows:

Table 1.1: Stages of Adolescence

Three main **stages of adolescence** can be discerned:

Early adolescence (10-13 years) – In this stage, there is a spurt of growth and development of secondary sexual characteristics.

Mid adolescence (14-15 years) – This stage is characterized by forming new relationships with opposite sex and the peer groups and the development of a separate identity from parents.

Late adolescence (16-18 years) – At this stage, adolescents behave similar to adults, and has formed a distinct identity and has their own opinions and ideas.

From the above paragraphs, you might have thought that adolescence is related with physical changes only by considering maturity as the most obvious reason. Usually maturity refers to the age or stage of life when an individual attains physical, emotional, social and intellectual development fully. On the contrary, you may wonder why we have not taken an age-graded definition of adolescence. Several reasons are raised against age-graded definitions. First, there is variation in the age of onset of pubescence. Second, age cannot be treated as a psychological variable; it is only a rough index of the experiences one goes through the process of psychological development. Finally, we cannot limit adolescence to the teen-age years as many individuals in their early twenties are in adolescent roles. For example, some 18-year-olds are financially independent and staying separately from their parents (therefore considered as adults), while others may still depend upon parents financially and emotionally attached to parents (therefore considered as adolescents). However, there are other social and cultural determinants in describing adolescence. Like childhood, adolescence is also a **cultural construction** instead of a biological phenomenon or an age range. Let us discuss the concept of adolescence in different cultures.

1.5.1 Adolescence in different cultures

You might be thinking how adolescence can be culturally constructed? Adolescence is culturally constructed in the sense that how various cultures define adult status and on the terms of learning adult roles and responsibilities by the adolescents. Adolescence occurs within a cultural context. Moreover, it takes place within a specific time frame for each individual. Your adolescence, that of your parents and that of your children will share certain commonalities, such as biological growth, but will be unique in certain respects such as play and music preference. Now you may agree that adolescence is present in all cultures but the lived experiences vary greatly among cultures. Adolescence is considered in different ways in various cultures. Read the matter given in the following box:

In middle class America, adolescence is termed as ‘vestibule adolescence’ which describes the period between 18- 20 years of age. Arab adolescents are supposed to remain within the family system until marriage; this reveals the influence of family interests and opinions. In Mexican American culture, adolescents are discouraged from leaving home.

Do you know that in some cultures adolescence does not occur? For example, instead of considering adolescence as a stage, they would conduct a puberty rite ceremony or rite of passage. This marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Does your culture celebrate any ceremony to mark the entrance from childhood to adolescence? There are examples of **puberty rituals** that have developed in many cultures to mark the departure from childhood to adolescence. Puberty rituals are especially common in various societies and traditional cultures.

Read the following box:-

In Samoa, an island in the Pacific Ocean near New Zealand, both male and female participate in puberty rituals. The traditional rite of passage into adolescence contains an elaborate process of tattooing sometime between ages 14 and 16. For boys the process lasts for 2 to 3 months whereas for girls, it takes 5 to 6 days.

(Retrieved from https://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/hip/us/hip_us_pearsonhighered/sample_chapter/020559526X.pdf)

Among Navajo Americans (a Native American tribe), females have a ceremonial ritual related with the onset of menarche. This indicates the entrance of children to adolescence stage.

(Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/3011605/Adolescent_Identity_Formation_and_Rites_of_Passage_The_Navajo_Kinaalda_Ceremony_for_Girls)

In Judaism, boys are considered as a 'bar mitzvah' (means 'son of the commandment') at the age of thirteen and girls as a 'bat mitzvah' at the age of twelve. By these ceremonies, they are looked upon as adults and obliged to follow Jewish commandments and laws.

In many parts of Tamilnadu when a girl attains puberty, a grand feast is conducted. She is bathed in turmeric and dressed as a bride and declared to the larger community that she had now matured.

In Nair community (one of the Hindu castes in Kerala) when girls attain puberty, they celebrate 'thirandukalyanam' in a grand scale. Thirandumangalyam and thiruandukuli are the other terms that are used for this ceremony.

Chuktia Bhunjia, a primitive tribal group in Odisha perform two ceremonial rites for girls-i) pre-puberty rite and ii) puberty rite. In pre-puberty rite, the girl is married to an arrow (Kan) or a branch of Mahul tree as her token husband. If she attains puberty before this rite, she is treated as characterless (Abheda) and face social disapproval. This rite is similar with marriage ceremony. During puberty, the girl is kept apart from others for one month. She is forbidden to visit any male person and to enter kitchen. After one month, she is taken to a river stream by her maternal aunt for bathing with oil-mixed turmeric. After wearing new cloth, she is taken to her uncle's house where a brass pot filled with water is given to her to carry to her own house. Directly entering into the kitchen, she starts cooking in new utensil to reveal her purity.

(Source: Retrieved from www.Antrocom.net/upload/sub/antrocom/100114/11-Antrocom.pdf).

From the above details, you know about the various ceremonies related with the coming of age (puberty) of children. You have noted that some of them are connected with an age of religious responsibility and some with the age of sexual maturity. Adolescence is not fixed; it varies between time, place and culture. Some researchers say that in India, in rural areas there is less variation between children and adults, as compared to urbanizing spaces. It is said that 'adolescence' is not seen as a separate phase in childhood. As soon as a child becomes physically mature to take up adult roles, s/he starts assuming adult roles like, for example, getting engaged in earning income, doing all household work, wear adult-like clothes, and even gets married at an earlier age. It is argued that concept of adolescence (as a phase of transition from childhood to adulthood) has come in existence in India and in many other countries of late.

Now you know that defining the boundaries of adolescence is not an easy task. Generally, psychologists agree that adolescence starts with puberty. At the same time, it is difficult to mark the end of adolescence which we term as 'maturity'. Usually maturity refers to the age or stage of life when a person is considered to be fully developed physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. The rate of attaining

maturity will differ from person to person. We usually assume that maturity is attained by an individual when s/he is engaging in the socially defined roles of adults in society such as economic independence, marrying, parenting and others. Therefore, we may consider adolescence as the period which lies between attaining puberty and assuming various adulthood roles. So far we have discussed the concept of childhood and adolescence. In the next section, we will find the differences among a child, an adolescent and an adult.

Activity 1

Interview two adolescents from different socio-economic backgrounds and prepare a report on their growing up experiences.

1.6 DIFFERENCES AMONG A CHILD, AN ADOLESCENT AND AN ADULT

Before demarcating a child from an adolescent and an adult, let us try to understand the meaning of each concept in terms of some criteria. In the earlier sections, we have explained who child and adolescent are. **An adult** is a human being or living organism that is of relatively mature age, typically associated with sexual maturity and the attainment of reproductive age. While considering the difference among a child, an adolescent and an adult, we may consider the following criteria:

- Age
- Differences in range of domains
 - Physical
 - Cognition
 - Social
 - Emotional
- Perception

Let us discuss each criterion in detail.

- **Age:** Most of us think that age is the main factor in deciding the difference among a child, an adolescent and an adult. We have already discussed the chronological age of a child under the title ‘age criterion’ in section 1.4 and of an adolescent in the table 1.1 given under the section 1.5. The legal definition of entering adulthood usually varies between ages 16-21, depending on the region or community or country in question. Why we have not taken an age approach has already been discussed under ‘the concept of adolescence’. Age-criterion on the basis of various developmental stages consists of the following features:
 - **Age of identity exploration:** Children and adolescents are struggling to find out who they are and what they want out of schooling. In the case of adults, they have attained self-identity in terms of their responsibility to family and society.
 - **Age of instability:** Children and adolescents feel instability about their social roles and responsibility. They are guided by the adults what to do and what not to do. On the contrary adults express stableness in their social roles.
 - **Age of self-focus:** Children and adolescents lack self-focus in their decisions. They search for adult guidance especially from parents and

teachers in childhood and adolescence stages. Adolescents even turn to their friends for support and self-clarification, including their peers' opinions in their emerging self-definitions. Adults are totally self-focused in their day-to-day activities.

- **Age of feeling-in-between:** Unlike adolescents, children and adults lack the feeling-in-between childhood and adulthood. But adolescents consider themselves as emerging adults. They assume responsibility for themselves, but still do not completely feel like an adult.
- **Differences in range of domains:** Development is described in three domains- physical, cognitive and social/ emotional domains. Let us examine the differences among a child, an adolescent and an adult on the basis of three domains.
 - **Physical:** Physical growth during childhood continues at a steady pace. The transition from childhood to adolescence involves a number of biological changes such as growth spurt, hormonal changes and sexual maturation that come with puberty. During adulthood, physical growth reaches at its peak.
 - **Cognition:** Unlike adults, the cognition of a child is characterized by freshness in thought. A child always sees the world through new eyes and is interested in learning and exploring the world. Adolescents often view the world in terms of polarities- right /wrong, good/bad, whereas adults move away from this absolutist thinking as they become aware of multiple perspectives of others.
 - **Social:** Children and adolescents are in the path of social development by imbibing new ideas, values and learning new skills. The goal of them is to develop a positive sense of self. They receive these learning experiences from their caregivers and others in the microsystem. The social development of adults is linked with the social roles they have to perform in society. These roles are categorized into work, marriage and parenting. As suggested by Erikson's theory of adult development, work is related with having an identity, marriage in search of intimacy and parenting children in terms of generativity.
 - **Emotion:** Unlike adults, children and adolescents are in the process of developing their ability to manage emotions. Lack of this ability sometimes leads them to risk-taking behaviours. On the contrary, adults achieve the ability of self-regulation and self-management.
 - **Perception:** Children, adolescents and adults differ a lot in their perception of the world. For example, by asking a question such as 'What makes clouds move?' you will get a series of answers from children and adults. Look at the three responses:

Child 1: As I am walking, cloud is also walking.

Child 2: They move themselves because they are alive.

Adolescent: Because of earth's rotation, cloud moves.

Adult: Clouds move because of the wind.

From the above responses, you can find out the differences in the perception of individuals in understanding the causality of geographical phenomenon. Children mostly perceive in terms of external reality (see the responses of Child 1 & Child 2).

Unlike adults, children keep information from their senses aloof and may therefore perceive the visual world differently. Adolescents think phenomenon in abstract manner and adults perceive it on the basis of experiences.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) On what basis do you differentiate a child from an adult?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed the concept of childhood and adolescence from various perspectives. While examining the anthropological viewpoint, you could see that there are no chronological limits of childhood or biological boundaries. According to sociological perspective, childhood is a social construction. From the viewpoint of cultural perspective, our attitude towards childhood is influenced by the dominant belief systems of the society in which we live, and so will vary across time and culture. Next we define the term ‘child’ in different perspectives. Though there is no uniformity in the age range of a child, normally we will consider a person who is under 18 years of age as a child.

We explained the concept of adolescence and discussed it in the context of different cultures. Adolescence is not fixed; it varies between time, place and culture. At the same time, it is difficult to mark the end of adolescence which we term as ‘maturity’. The Unit concludes by differentiating a child from an adolescent and an adult.

1.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Compare and contrast childhood in ancient and modern times on the basis of following criterion:
 - Responsibility
 - Competence
2. Select any one socio-cultural context in India and examine how childhood and adolescence are perceived in that society.
3. Do you agree with the statement that ‘adolescence is culturally constructed’? Justify your answer.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. i) Write your own answer. Refer to section 1.3.2.
2. i) In Medieval Europe, infancy is generally considered to occur at birth or at the end of breast-feeding which prolongs up to age of three. The stage of childhood is considered to end at around seven years when an individual attains the competency to perform certain domestic or industrial tasks.

The eighteenth-century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau considered childhood occurring between birth and twelve years. Childhood differs across time, place and culture. Hence, there is no universal agreement on the definition of child.

3. i) Refer to section 1.6

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UNIT 2 SOCIALIZATION AND GROWING UP IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Concept of Socialization
 - 2.3.1 Features of Socialization
 - 2.3.2 Importance of Socialization
 - 2.3.3 Types of Socialization
- 2.4 Socialization Practices in Different Cultures
- 2.5 Growing Up in Various Contexts
 - 2.5.1 Growing up in various types of family structures
 - 2.5.1.1 Traditional Family
 - 2.5.1.2 Non-Traditional Family
 - 2.5.1.3 Family Structure Based on Income
 - 2.5.2 Parent-Child Relationship
 - 2.5.2.1 Impact of Different Parenting Styles on Child Development
 - 2.5.3 Growing in Adverse Situations
 - 2.5.3.1 Children and poverty
 - 2.5.3.2 Children in the war zone
 - 2.5.3.3 Children in orphanages
 - 2.5.3.4 Growing up as children of migrant workers
 - 2.5.3.5 Growing up with disability
 - 2.5.4 Growing up as a girl
 - 2.5.4.1 Growing up in various habitation
 - 2.5.4.2 Growing up in cities and rural areas
 - 2.5.4.3 Growing up in a tribal community
 - 2.5.4.4 Growing up in slum area
- 2.6 Implications for Teachers in understanding the growing up experiences of children
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Unit-End Exercises
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 2.10 References and Suggested Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Every society tries to make a responsible member out of each child who is born into it. The society socializes each member right from infancy till the last rites when s/he leaves the world, rather the process of socialization begins even from conception. This happens because the society tries to ensure that each member's behaviour will be meaningful in terms of group norms. Thus socialization is a process which converts a living organism into a social being. It is a continuous process which flows from one generation to another. The concept of self is developed through a gradual process, which continues throughout life. The concept of self is actually an image, which one

builds with the help of others. An ordinary child whose efforts are appreciated and rewarded will get the feeling of acceptance and self worth which help shape her/his personality in the years to come.

In this Unit, we will discuss the concept of socialization and the various growing up contexts of children. This Unit also helps you understand the impact of growing up experiences upon children. The implications for teachers in understanding the various growing up experiences of children are also mentioned in this unit.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- develop an understanding of the importance and types of socialization;
- become sensitive towards the process of socialization in different cultures leading to individual differences;
- identify how discrimination based on gender results in the formation of a negative self concept in girls and a positive self concept in boys;
- become aware of various rearing practices in different types of family structures in society;
- enumerate different types of issues in the growing up process; and
- discuss the implications for teachers in understanding the growing up experiences of children.

2.3 CONCEPT OF SOCIALIZATION

The word 'socialization' refers to the process of interaction through which the child imbibes the beliefs, values, attitudes and habits of the social group in which s/he has been born. From society's view point, socialization is the process through which society transmits its culture from generation to generation and thrives. From the individual's view point, the process of socialization involves learning of social behaviour and development of self. S/he learns to act according to the social expectations.

Let's have a look at some of the basic features of socialization

2.3.1 Features of Socialization

1. Instills basic discipline

Socialization inculcates basic discipline in an individual. An individual, in an attempt to gain social approval, learns to control her/his impulses.

2. Controls Behaviour

From birth till death, an individual learns to conform to society's norms and maintain social order. These rules and procedures become part of an individual's life and control her/his behaviour as per the norms of society.

3. Unanimity among agents of socialization aids in its process

Conflict between different agencies of socialization like home, school, peer and media will result in dilemmas among the ideas, examples and skills transmitted from one agency to another. This will result in slower and ineffective socialization of the individual.

4. Formal and non-formal socialization

Formal socialization happens through direct instruction from educational institutions and non formal socialization happens through agencies like home. Family is of course the primary and the most important source of education where children learn their language, customs, cultures and values.

5. A continuous process

Socialization is a continuous life long process and does not stop even when a child becomes an adult.

In the next section, we will discuss about the importance of socialization.

2.3.2 Importance of Socialization

Socialization is essential both to individuals and to the societies in which they live. It explains how individuals are intertwined to societies. A society perpetuates on its own based on the way how culture was taught to the new members. Socialization is an important part in child rearing. In Unit 5 of Block 2, you will study the importance of attachment relationship between a child and her/his parents. A secure attachment is central to the development of positive social relationships in the future. We all know that parents are the first teachers of what social relationships are like. In the process of socialization, parents, peers, and others in the child's world help the growing child in learning how to interact in proper manner according to the rules and norms of their society. For most children, schools continue and reinforce the socialization started by the family. By placing children among a variety of students in the classroom and listening to instruction of various teachers, schools teach the art of flexibility.

The newborn child, during the course of the socialization, learns the culture, skills, language, manual dexterity, which enable her/him to become a responsible, participating member of the society. The main goal of socialization is to promote the child's acceptance and internalization of social norms. Though the self begins to take shape in childhood, it is during adolescence, that self-concept and personal identity assume more importance. Adolescence is a period of widespread anticipatory socialization. By observing the different roles played by individuals in media, adolescents start internalizing the outlook, expectations, and role pattern of them. Thus, acquisition of the appropriate roles that an individual is expected to play is another important aspect of socialization. As males, females, parents, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, neighbours, students, and teachers – individuals learn to play various roles as per the norms of the society. But it must be remembered that human being is not the product of socialization alone. Heredity also plays an important part. S/he generally possesses the inherited potential that can make her/him a person under conditions of maturation and conditioning. In the next section you come to know about various types of socialization.

2.3.3 Types of Socialization

There are various types of socialization which happen at various stages of a child's development and affect his/her thoughts, feelings and actions as s/he develops into a mature adult. Let's examine them one by one to know more about their influence on the child's thinking and subsequent personality development.

- *Primary Socialization:* It is the first socialization by means of which children are trained to be satisfactory members of their society. For example, if the

father respects his parents, the child learns to respect him and other elderly members of the society.

- *Secondary Socialization:* It is the socialization in which a person learns to be acceptable in a smaller group which is part of a larger group. The values, attitudes and beliefs are learnt from the group. For example, a class X student wants to become a doctor in future after attending career counselling class.
- *Developmental Socialization:* In this type of socialization, focus is more on developing social skills pertaining to the culture and one's stage of development. For example, a shy senior high school student starts to take part in 'thought for the day programme' in order to develop her/his verbal communication.
- *Anticipatory Socialization:* This type of socialization refers to the process wherein a person practices or accepts the values and norms of a group where s/he anticipates joining in the future. For example, teacher trainees learning how to become teachers.
- *Resocialization:* This type of socialization involves rejecting previous behaviour patterns and accepting new ones so the individual can shift from one part of his life to another. Resocialization is said to be happening throughout human life cycle. For example, when a person changes her/his job, s/he tends to pick up the culture of her/his new job.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Explain with some examples how socialization affects our attitudes.

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ii) Is socialization a daily process? Elaborate.

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2.4 SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

You know that various cultures, and subcultures, differ with respect to the specific behaviours that are considered as appropriate in society. Members of the society learn those social rules, as well as how far the code may be stretched. In this context, socialization may be defined as the learning of skills and knowledge required for effective participation in the society. Cultural socialization refers to the manner by which parents address ethnic and racial issues within the family, mainly how parents transfer and communicate the cultural values, beliefs, customs, and behaviours to

the child. It also depends on the internalization of cultural norms and values and acquisition of skills by the child to be a functional member in a multicultural society. One of the most important factors that shape the personality of an individual is the process of socialization s/he undergoes through accepting or rejecting values, beliefs and attitudes. Socialization is a continuous process of acquiring norms, values and behaviours. This process begins when we grow up, when the influences around us shape our behaviour as to what is acceptable and what is taboo within our culture. For example, a young man from Texas might be instructed in the culturally proper way to greet someone. First you remove your hat, then you look them in the eye, extend out your right hand and say ‘Hello, ma’am, it’s nice to meet you.’ Now let’s say that years later this cowboy gets a job in Japan, where they avoid eye contact and physical contact in their greetings. He will have to go through the process of socialization to adapt to this new environment.

Mode of greeting is different in various parts of our country. A child born in a Sikh family will learn to say “ Sat Shri Akal”, in a Hindu family s/he will join his/her hands and say, ”Namaste” and in a Muslim family s/he will say “Aadaab or As-salamu alaykum”. Our food habits, dressing styles, celebration of various festivals all are determined by our socialization process.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Explain with some examples how socialization process happens in different cultures.

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ii) Why do people in different cultures have different social norms?

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2.5 GROWING UP IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

There are various kinds of diversities which children face while growing up and which have a direct bearing on their personality development. There are various kinds of developmental risks to children which happen as a result of growing up in different types of diversities. Of course, there are certain benefits too. It is the role of society to ensure that children do not face much cognitive, behavioural, motivational and linguistic deficits.

Diversity Conceptualized as at Risk

Children from migrant families are more at risk for developing delinquency, aggression, hyperactivity, attention deficits and poor academic performance. They also face

discrimination based on caste, class, race, creed or colour. Experiences of such exclusions at various societal levels constitute insults to children’s healthy emotional, social, physical and emotional development. Segregation, which includes residential, economic, linguistic, social, and psychological—not only places the child at risk, but also spreads mistrust among populations of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Consider the following case:

Case 1: *10 year old Rohit, a migrant child wants to play in the park with his peers. Although his peers will not involve him directly in their game of cricket yet will use him as an extra who will run to get the ball for them whenever it goes out of the field. Rohit feels hurt at this segregation but is not able to do much about it.*

Diversity conceptualized as an asset

Researches have shown that there are some positive influences of migrant families on children’s development like strong ethnic values, strong feelings of family cohesion, giving high value to education to enhance social status. Instilling of these values through the middle childhood to the next level ensures that the children will develop strong feelings of need for achievement.

For example, many families who migrated from UP, Bihar and Southern states to the Northern parts of the country especially in Delhi have imbibed culture of the two states. Their children also enjoy the benefits of dual cultural upbringing which was once thought of as a liability on children and have the potentials to hamper their proper social emotional growth. In fact, studies show that bilingualism promotes cognitive growth and enhances coping skills in a person. Such children coming from these diverse backgrounds, merging with a new culture, actually are able to connect with people of different diverse backgrounds, which lead to their more personal and professional growth in future.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.
(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) What are the various issues concerning growing up in different contexts?

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2.5.1 Growing up in various types of family structures

Growing up in different types of family structures can be looked at from various dimensions like traditional families, non traditional families, low income families and affluent families. The family structures and child rearing practices play an important role in the socialization of the individual and her/his future personality is shaped accordingly.

The diversity of family structures in the present day world is definitely greater today than at any other point of time in its history. Infants are born into family types and structures, which were not even existing as many as fifty years ago. There are many

new family types, which did not exist earlier, like, the children born through reproductive technologies, remarriage of divorcees, single mothers who never married. Adding to the confusion, single lesbian women and single gay men, married lesbian couples and married gay couples are also rearing children. Then there are substantial numbers of children who live only with grandparents and have never seen their biological parents.

The types of family structures can be generally divided into two- i) traditional family and ii) non-traditional family. In the next section, we discuss about the growing up experiences of children in such families.

2.5.1.1 Traditional family

You know that in traditional families, there were two heterosexual parents who were married to one another and biologically related to the children they were rearing. Fathers in such families were expected to be working, while mothers stayed at home and were busy with child care and household upkeep. Sometimes both father and mother are working. And this pattern of traditional family is the norm against which all other family rearing environment is measured. As per Freud's psychoanalytic theory, children not raised in homes with both biological parents are at risk for psychosocial problems. But in the present day world, diversity of family structure is a growing reality. Now let us discuss about non- traditional family.

2.5.1.2 Non-traditional family

Family that extends beyond the concept of traditional family is considered as non-traditional family. Today, great diversities are displayed in family forms such as single parent families, divorcing families, grandparents led families, cohabiting households, commuter families, families created by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. Each of these has separate consequences for children. Though there are different forms of traditional families, we will discuss some forms of non-traditional families in subsequent paragraphs.

Single parent family

Single parent family is a family structure in which parents raise their children without a partner either due to divorce, death of a spouse or never been married but to have a child alone. Single parent in such family has to play the roles of both father and mother to her/his child. All of the tasks that would otherwise be shared by two parents must be accomplished by one which often led to stress. A single parent faces stress from many sources that include financial problems, strained relationships, the demands of parenting, and lack of time to care themselves. One particular concern raised in these situations is called emotional parentification, in which children become more concerned by mediating between their parents (Martin et.al., 2004). Children in such families have to take more responsibility in managing the household activities such as looking after siblings, cleaning house, shopping, etc.

According to Amato (2006) children growing in single parenting due to divorce display not only behavioural problems at home but also strained relations with peers, low self-esteem, academic problems, and adjustment difficulties at school. If the custodial parent can continue to be warm, authoritative, and consistent, there is less chance of children to become depressed.

Commuter families

In commuter families, one parent is at home and takes care of household responsibilities and the other parent comes home for short periods such as at week

ends or on holidays. The success of commuter families depends on the ability of spouses to adjust each other. Children should also be convinced about the reason of one parent staying away. Through phones and e-mails the parent can inquire the whereabouts and academic achievement of his/her child.

Cohabitation

Cohabitation means living together before marriage. The number of children growing up in cohabiting households is increasing now-a-days. There is less stability in family structure of cohabitation when compared with nuclear families and single-parenting families. Two types of concerns arise on base of cohabitation-i) instability in partner relationships and ii) mounting financial problems. Children in cohabitation households are negatively impacted on cognitive, behavioural and health outcomes (Waldfoegel et.al. 2010).

Children living in non-traditional families have to face social challenges. Sometimes they feel strange in growing up in such families when compared with traditional families. Parents should help children to understand that it is not family structure that matters but the bond created among themselves. It is necessary for parents and teachers to develop strong bond with their children so that they feel secure. From the above discussions, you come to know that family practices reflect and transmit the culture and values of society. Parents do not develop their own parenting practices but it is due to the process of socialization.

2.5.1.3 Family structure based on income

The impact of family diversity on human development needs to be considered with particular focus on process of socialization. Many researches have been conducted around the study of single parent families , step families and dual career two parent families and results have consistently revealed that family resources, processes and relationships are more important predictors of successful socializations than are assessment of family structures .

Let's have a look on the impact that low income families and affluent families have in the socialization process of the child.

- **Low income family**

Children from low income families are less likely to receive adequate nutrition and appropriate health care than affluent families. Also low income families are at great risk for exposure to environmental harms, witness to community/family violence, domestic violence, and direct victim of physical abuse and neglect.

Parents with less economic resources have been found to be less confident in their parenting, show less warmth towards their children. Researches have found that parents with lesser economic resources have been more verbally and physically abusive to their children and showed lesser warmth to their children as compared to parents with greater financial resources.

- **Affluent families**

Children from affluent families are lesser at risk than children from poor families for developing sociopathic tendencies. From the above discussions it is clear that the family plays a very important role in shaping the values and goals of a person which is essential for socialization.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Explain with examples, how single parent families affect socialization.

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ii) How do family structures based on income affect socialization? Explain with examples.

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2.5.2 Parent-Children Relationship

The child’s exposure to human interaction is the family setting. S/he learns to respond to his mother and other family members. Depending upon the quality of these early interactions, s/he relates to people outside the homes with expectation or uncertainty. If the family members enjoy each other’s company, spend a lot of time doing things together and have a positive attitude towards people at home and outside, the child imbibes similar attitudes.

Conversely, if the family interactions are restricted to the mundane business of day-to-day living or interaction takes place only when there is a conflicting situation, the child does not learn to look forward to interaction with others with a positive frame of mind. The influence of sensitive and responsive parenting affects the quality of parent-child relationship.

Read the following case:

Case 2: *Sonia is a 10-year-old girl who is very fearful of all males. She becomes very dull in front of male teachers but is otherwise very active with her friends and other female staff. A detailed interview with her revealed that she had an abusive alcoholic father who would shout at her every time. She had become a withdrawn personality who rarely ever spoke her mind.*

Activity 1

Discuss with your friends about Sonia’s case and suggest some ways to improve her social interaction.

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2.5.2.1 Impact of different parenting styles on child development

Parenting style refers to the way in which parents raise their children, The way people do parenting affects their child's socio-economic growth and development. These parenting styles correspond with the type of discipline a parent generally uses with his/her children.

- **Authoritative**

Many people think that authoritative parenting is more successful approach to parenting due to its high level of involvement and balanced control. Such parents set realistic expectations and consistent patterns of interactions for their children and also provide them with a fair / natural consequence.

Natural consequences occur as a natural result of a child's behaviour with no intervention required. Eg., if a child touches a hot stove and is burnt by the heat, the burn is a natural consequence. Authoritative parents always express warmth and affection. They are patient to listen to the child's view and also give freedom adequately. They fix rules of behaviour in consultation with children, explain the reason for rules and regulations and make the children feel that it is their own decision and allow flexibility with mutual consensus.

Researches have shown that parents following authoritative style raise children who are high on self esteem, have better social skills as compared to others and become more socially mature as adults. But parenting styles vary from culture to culture and authoritative style may not be appropriate in many cultural settings.

- **Authoritarian**

In the authoritarian style, parents are strict and seek conformity and obedience with unquestionable compliance from their children. Such parents exercise a large amount of control over their children's behaviour and decisions. They will set rigid rules to follow, for their children and if they dare raise a rebellious voice, consequences can be very severe. Children growing up in such homes suffer from low self-esteem, get anxious easily and are generally withdrawn in personality. They may not engage in anti-social behaviour for fear of their parent's disapproval.

- **Permissive**

It is said that extreme of anything is not good and it is reflected in permissive parenting. Permissive parents tend to be over protective, over indulgent, warm, loving and nurturing towards their children. Children of such parents are more likely to be impulsive with a complete disregard for consequences. However, they may have high self-esteem, confident and good social skills.

- **Neglectful**

Such parents do not respond to their child's needs and are less demanding of their children. However, this could be due to their own over involvement with their work or alcoholism or depression, etc. Such parents tend to look at their children for emotional support and their children often have to do their "parenting". Children of such parents more often are fearful, anxious, socially withdrawn, perform poorly in school and are at risk for substance abuse.

Check Your Progress 5

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) How does style of parenting shape the self concept of an individual?

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2.5.3 Growing in Adverse Situations

There are varied adverse situations such as children reared in malnourished environment, in the war zone, in orphanages and even growing up as children of migrant workers. Let’s examine them one by one which affects a child’s social and emotional development.

2.5.3.1 Children and poverty



Fig.2.1: Children and poverty

Many researches have shown that poverty impairs children’s cognitive skills and reduces their chances of advancement beyond their parents. In fact, a bad environment can worsen the life chances not only of the child but also the future of the child. Children growing up in a community with gangs, dangerous streets where

violence and robbery are natural side effects, discouraging role models, confused social expectations will end up himself/herself as a psychopath or a sociopath.

Researches have shown that living in a neighbourhood where 20% or more of the residents are poor with other things being held constant, like parental education, income, health, etc – the test scores of the children are lowered. Think of the ways how the immediate environment impact upon the child’s development. Noise, air, soil pollution and even traffic do affect the child’s emotional, social and cognitive development. The locality they belong to, the community resources, availability of school and health services – all contribute to the child’s shaping of personality and development.

Social milieu also plays its own role in shaping a child’s development. It is also seen that children of two generations who lived in slum areas actually do worse than the one generation that could move out of this slum neighbourhood. And how does this happen? It is also a result of socialization. Children reared in poor neighbourhood, on an average get less education and low income jobs and were at risk for more physical, social and emotional problems. And thus they end up in poor neighbourhoods as adults, themselves. When they became parents, they commonly passed on some of their personal disadvantages to their own children which further hampered their own psycho-social behavioural pattern.

2.5.3.2 Children in the war zone

In every war/conflict, women and children are the most vulnerable members of the society who suffer the most. For children, war threatens the security of a stable home, crushes dreams of a playful innocent childhood, mars opportunities and put family members' life at stake.

Read the following cases:

Case 3: *Ammar, a 10-year-old boy, who lives on a construction site which was left incomplete when war ravaged Syria. Like thousands of Syrian children, he does not go to school and picks litters to help his family survive. His family works from six in the morning to six in the evening and earns 600 Syrian pounds in a day which is less than 2.50 dollars.*

There is no water tap nearby so he washes once a month because the nearest tap is miles away and one has to stand in sun waiting for hours to get his/her turn. Everyday fetching water for cooking and drinking takes its toll and he faints many times a month. There are only 6 taps for 100 buildings with 50 families in each.

Case 4: *Nahida, a little girl of 9 years looks wistfully at a distance, "That is where we used to love. I would go to school.' My mother would sing lullabies to us. She would pack us delicious tiffins. I had lots of friends....."*

She sighs,

"Now my mother is dead. I couldn't trace my father and brother. We had to flee the place due to bombing. All my friends are either dead or have left for some place – I do not know where to go."

It is pathetic but today thousands of children like Ammar and Nahida have seen their homes destroyed, family members killed and their lives plunged from comfortable lives into abject poverty. The early years of life are very vital for success and stability.

2.5.3.3 Children in orphanages

Millions of children today are living in orphanages without the love and care of a family. In "good" cases the children do receive food, clothes, education and shelter. In "worst" cases they are starved, abused, isolated and many die or become juvenile delinquents. In all cases, they never get the love, support and sense of identity that only a loving family can give.

Evidence shows that children growing up in institutional care experience various developmental delays and emotional attachment disorders. As a result they have lower intellectual, social and behavioural capabilities and are at risk for delinquent behaviours as a result of being branded as social outcasts all their lives. It is pathetic as theirs is a traumatized life of loneliness, homelessness and once they grow up it will be difficult for them to trust anyone or develop permanent relationships.

Such children have a deep sense of abandonment and naturally tend to develop strong bonds with volunteers who come to meet them for some time. Their wounds reopen after the volunteers leave after several weeks or months and when this pattern happens year after year, many children learn to protect themselves emotionally by castrating themselves from all love and hope.

2.5.3.4 Growing up as children of migrant workers

Consider the following case:

Case 5: Savitri at the age of 17 migrated from Bihar to Hissar in Haryana, as a domestic help. She was in for a big shock. First the agency fellow, who had lured her from home, abused her physically for several days along with his friends. One day she managed to run away and went to a police station. They sent her to a women shelter from where she finally got stabilized and now work as a domestic help. But the trauma is still there and her children aged 4 and 6 have never seen any school for lack of money. They just loiter on the streets while she goes for work. She has called her 12 year old sister from her hometown who does babysitting and has never been to a school either. “This is the only life I know”, the sister shrugs her shoulders when asked if she would like to go to a school.

Migrant workers face discrimination and assault everywhere in society. Whether one talks about people in the same country, migrating to another state or people migrating to another country for various reasons, discrimination and harassment is the common pattern everywhere.

2.5.3.5 Growing up with disability

For the disabled children, the experience of transition from childhood to adolescence will be different from that of non-disabled peers. Disabled children in their childhood feel more isolated from peer influences, less likely to engage in risky behaviours, and have smaller social networks. It is the duty of care takers and teachers to make the growing up experience of disabled children as a learning experience for the child. The stereotype attitude that disabled children cannot do anything on their own is a wrong notion. They can do anything like others, but in a different way.

Check Your Progress 6

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.
(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Discuss how child’s personality gets affected while living in orphanages.

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ii) Discuss the effects of trauma faced by children living in war zones.

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2.5.4 Growing up as a girl

Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of India’s Independence movement, and India’s first Prime Minister once said, “You can tell the condition of a Nation by looking at the status of

its Women.” So what is the status of the women in India, today? Well, overall, things are changing for women and they have a voice in everyday life, in the business world as well as in politics too. But the fact remains that India is still a male dominated society and women are seen as subordinate, inferior to men. The qualities which a girl is expected to imbibe are to be patient, giving and soft spoken. However, the situation varies from place to place and in various habitations.

Let’s examine the state of a girl child growing up in various habitations.

2.5.4.1 Growing up in cities and rural areas

In cities, girls are getting access to education with more or less equal opportunities. They are seen working in various walks of life as teachers, receptionists, nurses, doctors, engineers, corporate etc. Yet they face social discrimination in terms of sexual harassment/ eve teasing , dowry issues and “women social role” issues. The responsibility of the household tasks is still hers along with rearing of children even if she is earning equal to her husband . Her parents may not be welcome in her marital home and related social issues.

According to the report ‘Human Development in South Asia 2000 – The Gender Question’, women in South Asia face severe discrimination and disparities in economic opportunities, legal status and protection, education, health care and political governance. In developing countries the lack of educational opportunities for girls from the marginalized masses has become a major issue in public policy discourse in recent years. The literacy rate for women worldwide is 71.4 % compared with 82.7% for men. Of the 960 million illiterate adults, two thirds are women.

In most of the feudal set-ups of rural India, girls are married early for fear of sexual harassment. The early marriage of girls is a matter of social prestige in many communities. Social fear of girls getting alienated from their environment is yet another factor for low literacy level among girls.

2.5.4.2 Growing up in a tribal community

Gender inequality continues to remain a serious problem in India. The literacy rate of females among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is below national average. Their mobility is limited due to socio cultural constraints and normally they engaged in low paid, high labour intensive and unskilled jobs.

In most tribal hamlets, girls are expected to get accustomed to the role played by their mothers, hence they start participating in work quite early. The Government and a lot of NGO’s are working to improve the conditions of girls. For example, in Odisha, People’s Rural Education Movement (PREM) has helped the setting up of residential hostels so that the tribal girls are able to attend schools. A lot of tribal girls who were otherwise not able to go to school earlier are now doing so. Many are now studying in English medium schools which are further an achievement for them.

2.5.4.3 Growing up in slum area

In slum areas, the situation for girls is still more complex as due to the role identity and the socialization processes, they do not find themselves in the negotiation terms. The life situations where the personality of these girls gets shaped are most often devoid of human rights aspects and hence they “live” life but do not grow and bloom.

From their pressing background when these girls go to schools, they do not find relief. Besides the physical isolation, the discriminatory practices like asking them to sweep, clean the room, make tea for teachers, set pre-conceived notions that girls

have low intelligence or that they can learn only by scolding and beatings. Many NGO's in the slum areas are working towards the education of girls and their families in the country but clearly that is not enough. The community has to come forward and change its mindset. In addition to financial constraints, a variety of cultural factors influence gender inequalities in school enrollment.

Check Your Progress 7

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Explain with some examples how socialization affects our attitudes towards girl child.

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ii) Do girls face gender bias in slum areas? Elaborate.

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2.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS IN UNDERSTANDING THE GROWING UP EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN

Socio-emotional skills are required by the teachers to teach social emotional competency like gratitude, empathy and compassion to students. Often socio cultural aspects of society are deeply rooted in the conscious and unconscious minds of the people. They get translated into action, interests and behaviour of the people. Thus issues of caste, class and gender are socially, historically and culturally rooted in our society. Teacher, as a change agent can help sensitize his/her students to these aspects which are at the root of all inequalities, biases and discriminations in society.

Teacher as a source of socio-cultural change

Teachers can and must play the role of a change in society. As a learned person, much more aware of the current developments and changing faces of the modern society, a teacher has the responsibility of linking the local world with the global. Teacher as an agent of social change can not only interpret but often convey the new ideas, beliefs, values of the outside world to the world of the child and in rural areas, to the local community.

Caste as a phenomenon of social stratification has a long history in India and has social, cultural, economic and political implications. Our education system historically had evolved through the period of traditional "Gurukul" system where only the Brahmins and Kshatriyas could receive education. Education has always been the prerogative of the upper castes and classes. It was only during the later period of colonial rule in India that the need for education for all came to be recognized.

However, it was only after independence in 1947 that a concerted effort was made by the Govt. of India to bring about “democratization” of education. Reservation of seats in educational institutions was made. All the welfare policies of the Government were meant to bring about social mobility and change in society. To help the lower caste and other backward classes several commissions were constituted. Purposes of these were to bring about social change and remove extreme inequalities in societies. Kaka Kalekar Commission (1953), Mandal Commission (1989) were a few instances of these efforts.

In the education system, just as in society at large, the issue of gender inequality has gained recognition. It has been observed that sex difference between male and female has a sociological aspect. It is the socially determined differences rather than biological difference between sexes wherein lies are the root of gender discrimination in societies. Two major avenues through which gender discrimination is conveyed are the gender distribution of school personnel and the treatment of females and males in textbooks and other instructional materials. Both students as well as teachers bring similarly biased gender role expectations to learning interactions and behaviours which conform to these are reinforced and rewarded. Being assertive, active, individualistic, autonomous and self confident places males at advantage in schools. They are more initiating, persistent and effective in classroom activities.

Females who are taught to be socially subservient, dependent and accommodating are less likely to be as assertive, confident and persistent in their interactions with their classroom teachers and with their male peers.

In this context, teachers should be sensitized as to how they differentiate their performance expectations, communication styles and evaluative feedback systems according to the gender of the students, how it affects their academic efforts and achievements and how they can be changed to be more gender equitable. Praise and constructive criticism are specific remedies to bring about these changes.

The need of the hour is to train teachers and sensitize them towards **gender equality** so that they are able to analyze the various aspects of educational systems for gender bias and to make changes in areas where gender equity is desired. Teacher is the most important person in the educational system who can bring about social change to diminish traditional sex role concepts.

Updating pedagogy

Teachers also need to update the pedagogy they are using in the classroom.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a pedagogy that makes modifications in instructional strategies to account for diversity. **Reciprocal teaching** and **cooperative learning** are two of the most effective strategies to engage students in culturally relevant learning. **Reciprocal teaching** occurs when students take turns leading the class discussion. This method invites students to use their cultural viewpoints to express the instructional material in their own words.

Cooperative learning is effective when group collaboration as well as individual responsibility is utilized for the completion of assignments. The outcome of cooperative learning goes beyond the completion of the task and is also teaching students to know and praise their own and each other’s cultures.

However, culturally relevant teaching will only be effective if the teacher understands how non-verbal cues are seen by their students. In some cultures, it is considered rude, disrespectful and even confrontational for a student to make eye contact with

authority figures. In other cultures, it is actually forbidden to shake hands with a stranger of the opposite gender.

As a change agent, the teachers can make a dent into the socialization processes that very often promote masculine and feminine roles tailor made for boys and girls. This can happen only if the teachers are convinced, conscious and concerned about bringing an attitudinal change in the attitude of boys and girls from primary years so that there is gender harmony in all transactions within and outside the schooling processes.

Check Your Progress 8

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Discuss the role of teachers in impacting social change.

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

Socialization is a very important aspect of every individual wherein s/he learns to play different roles. Roles are learned expectations prescribed for standardized forms of behaviour. Gender roles are learnt in the family, from parents, older siblings, and other members who provide role models appropriate to the gender of a person. Learning is reinforced at appropriated points. Child rearing practices have a marked effect on the development of the self concept. Schools, formal and non formal, its curriculum and teachers have a major role to play in developing materials and learning experiences that would foster a spirit of equality and harmony between girls and boys in their early years and prepare them for equal partnership and shared roles for a common future. Traditional family socializations stifle the natural curiosity and communication skills making them diffident, submissive, often meek and mute by the time they enroll in school. The need of the hour is to develop sensitivity in teachers so that they are able to smartly transact the curriculum in the classroom by encouraging activities and creating situations for girls and boys to express themselves freely and develop self confidence and mutual trust.

2.8 UNIT- END EXERCISES

1. What is the importance of family in the life of a child?
2. Discuss how a teacher can act as an agent of social change.

2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. i) Socialization affects our attitudes in many ways because we grow up seeing those norms around us. We just tend to follow them blindly as these norms get ingrained in our upbringing. For example, a person from Bihar will have his staple diet as daal and rice. But a person from Punjab is not comfortable with his meals / rice if he does not get a Roti made out of wheat flour.

- ii) Yes, socialization is a daily process as we tend to imbibe what is happening around us emotionally, socially, culturally and politically.
2.
 - i) Socialization process happens in different cultures in various ways. A lady from Bengal wears sari in a different way than a lady from Madhya Pradesh or Tamil Nadu.
 - ii) People in different cultures have different social norms because of the different socio cultural milieu in which they live.
3. There are various issues concerning growing up in different contexts like migrating from one place to another. Children in this case have to perforce learn different cultural norms and tend to imbibe such diversity consciously and unconsciously. This may leave some children scarred mentally or some may learn to be more flexible and adaptable in their approach.
4.
 - i) Single parent families affect the socialization process immensely both directly and indirectly. Some single parent may take the parenting process very seriously and may become more possessive while others may not be able to spend quality time with their children for want of resources.
 - ii) Children from poor families may face neglect and aggression on the part of their parents. They may ill afford spending quality time with their children and could be a victim of domestic violence, whereas children from affluent families, in general will have better chances of growing up as balanced personalities.
5.
 - i) If the parents are democratic, the child may develop more flexible attributes in his personality as compared to children of strict, authoritarian parents who may feel something lacking in themselves all the time.
6.
 - i) Living in orphanages scars a child for life emotionally and socially. They tend to be rebellious in their approach, are not able to trust anyone easily and have more breakups in their family life as well.
 - ii) Children living in war zone tend to be more stressed out, introverted and face problems of insomnia or nightmares. Their life remains traumatized and their self concept gets shattered very easily.
7.
 - i) Little children imitate what they see their elders doing. Even when they are playing “house-house” during childhood, they will enact the role of father as coming from office, scolding children and his wife. He is served hot tea while watching television. And when he gets the news of a girl child being born in the family he throws his tea, starts howling because a girl child is born. This entire behavioural pattern is part of their socialization process which the children enact even while playing.
 - ii) Yes, girls face gender bias in slum areas. Their brothers are sent to school while they help the mother with household work. Their brothers may hit them while playing but they are not supposed to react. They are given lesser food as compared to the males in the family, served last and then are supposed to wash the utensils. They also face physical abuse more often.
8.
 - i) Write your own answer. Refer to section 2.6.

2.10 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 3 AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Socialization: The Basic Concept
- 3.4 Agencies of socialization
 - 3.4.1 Micro level Socialization: Family, Peer Group, Neighbourhood
 - 3.4.2 Meso-level Socialization: School, Religion, Social Class
 - 3.4.3 Macro level Socialization: Global Community, Electronic Media, Social Networking
- 3.5 Let Us Sum-Up
- 3.6 Unit- End Exercises
- 3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.8 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

By now you must have become familiar with the term ‘socialization’ and how there is constant interaction of the individual with the society. You have also seen how the process of socialization enables a living organism to become a social being. As an ongoing process it continues from ‘womb to tomb’ and from generation to generation. Individuals are nurtured and shaped by various agencies in the society.

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce you to the various agencies of socialization and how each agency contributes to the moulding of an individual’s personality. We all agree that individuals cannot live in isolation. S/he has a natural instinct for sociability. There is constant interaction with family members, peers, teachers, schoolmates, relatives and members of the community. In modern times with the advance in science and technology, we can also feel the influence of social media, networking, etc. It is this interaction with the society that makes her/him a human being. In this unit, we revisit the concept of socialization and the agencies of socialization at micro, meso and macro levels. We will also try to understand the process of socialization at each level.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- identify the various agencies of socialization;
- classify the agencies at micro, meso and macro level;
- describe the process of socialization in family;
- explain the role of various agencies in gender socialization;
- discuss the role of school as an agency of socialization;
- appreciate the role of a teacher in the process of socialization in schools;
- name the different types of media used for the purpose of socialization; and
- discuss the impact of media on socialization.

3.3 SOCIALIZATION: THE BASIC CONCEPT

“To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly”.

— Henri Bergson

You may wonder how the two opposing processes, i.e., ‘to exist’ and ‘to change’ can happen simultaneously. But therein lies the uniqueness of human development. It consists of opposing processes- on the one hand, it brings changes in the person, and on the other hand, her/his self remains the same. In the previous chapter, we discussed how an infant grows and matures to a responsible and knowledgeable person equipped with necessary skills and holding beliefs and values of culture into which s/he is born. It must have become clear by now how socialization helps an individual acquire the values of the group so as to get inducted to that particular group. Indeed socialization has a profound influence on the way we think, feel and act. “Man is not born human but to be made human” (Park). But that does not imply that we are robots who act according to commands of the socializing agents. We all are constantly constructing our ‘self’. Our mind can reason and make choices. However, the lack of interaction with other members of the society may lead to disastrous consequences.

You must have heard of many tragic incidents of how isolation and deprivation of social experience cause irreparable damage to children. Details of such incidents can be found in the annals of abnormal child psychology like the case of Genie, who was locked in a room and tied to a potty chair when she was hardly 20 months. Since she was totally isolated from people for nearly twelve years and allowed to wallow in adverse conditions she had failed to acquire the use of language, the art of communication and showed little emotional responses to anything that went on around her. Genie’s case is an example of frozen social development which can cause adverse effects on a personality.

The above incident clearly illustrates that socialization and interaction are very much essential for human beings to become ‘human’. Very often misconception prevails that socialization is the same in all societies and is consistent within a particular society. It is very important to know that such notions are erroneous and need to be discarded. One must also acknowledge that socialization varies from society to society and from culture to culture. You may see the variation in the socialization process from infancy to adolescence; from adulthood to old age.

It may be difficult for you to accept the idea that it is socialization that gives shape to your thoughts, when all the while you have been taught that you are an individual personality and that you have your own interests, likes and dislikes. However, our expression of individual identity is always done in the socio- cultural context, i.e. who we are conditioned to a great extent by the agencies of socialization.

Several agencies and institutions with which a child is associated with her/his family, school, peer group, the neighbourhood, the occupational group and the social class contribute to the process of socialization. In childhood and adolescence, mostly it is the peer group that has profound influence on the individual where as in adulthood, it is the occupational group and the newly acquired family through marriage which play a major role in socialization. These agents impact the growing child and contribute in shaping each and every aspect of its development in conformity with the social and cultural aspirations and also the needs and demands of the society where s/he exists.

What determines human behaviour-Is it Nature (heredity) or Nurture (environment)? There have been many debates over this issue. Exhaustive studies on children have arrived at the conclusion that hereditary factors are vital for human 'equation' but at the same time, it is the individual's social interaction that makes her/him 'human'. Such interaction is made possible through observation, use of language for communication and other forms of contact and in this way, people learn to become members of the human community. These concepts are reinforced by theoretical inputs from Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and Jean Piaget who argue that children develop reasoning skills, morality, personality, and a sense of self through social observation, contact, and interaction.

The process of socialization, as we said earlier, is a life long process that begins from birth and ends with death and is said to occur in two phases such as primary and secondary. The primary stage denotes the socialization in infancy and childhood during which period a child acquires the most intense form of cultural learning. This stage marks the acquisition of basic knowledge of language and behaviour patterns laying the foundation for all the learning which happens later.

Secondary socialization maps the period in later childhood and adolescence when the child receives training in institutional or formal settings such as school. This level runs parallel to primary socialization. But, unlike in the family settings where children are accepted unconditionally by parents, in schools they are trained to conform to authority. They learn to interact in large groups. Their exposure to new culture makes this phase more complex and challenging.

Some sociologists have added one more level- adult socialization. **Adult socialization** takes place in adulthood when individuals adapt to new roles such as that of a husband/wife /employee etc. according to their needs and wants.

3.4 AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization cannot take place in a vacuum. Individuals, groups and institutions create the social context for socialization to take place. It is through these agencies that we learn and incorporate the values and norms of our culture. They also account for our positions in the social structure with respect to class, race and gender. The habits, skills, beliefs and standard of judgment that we learn in the socialization process enable us to become functional members of a society. However, the term 'functional' is coloured by the broader socio-cultural context. Bourdieu (1990) presents individual socialization as a process by which individuals are influenced by the class cultural milieu in which they are being reared.

The various agencies can be classified as formal/informal, active/passive or primary/secondary. However, there is no clear demarcation as all of them are very much interrelated. We shall examine the various agencies at three levels, viz., micro level, meso level and macro level.

3.4.1 Micro Level Socialization: Family, Peer Group and Neighbourhood

Micro level entails small group interaction. This level is vital because face to face, intense, and intimate interaction forms the basic formulation. Under micro-level socialization, we will discuss the role played by family, peer group and neighbourhood.

Family

Socialization can be conceived as a succession of processes occurring at various stages of development with the family being the first and foremost enduring agency of socialization. The young child's relationship with her/his family is one of the most significant, fateful and determining influences on the child. The family is said to be the 'cradle of social virtues'. It is here that the child's orientation to core values like cooperation, tolerance, self sacrifice, love and affection occur. The way a child establishes her/his relationships for better or worse with the rest of the world later in life is shaped, to a great extent, by her/his primary socialization in the family.

The family as a basic social institution has always been regarded as a core component for the development of the individual as well as for the society and the mankind. An infant embarks on the journey of life with the love and care of his/her family. Again it is in the family context that he/she imbibes the first lessons of life and tries to imitate the habits, customs and behaviour patterns of her/his family members. According to Bourdieu, we inherit habitus from our families. Habitus refers to a set of dispositions that mark us as part of our social class: manners, speech patterns, vocabulary and articulation styles, bodily behaviour and postures. Our preference for particular interaction is determined, to a great extent, by our habitus.

As a key agency of socialization in all human societies, the family transforms a young infant into a member of human community and acts as the first medium for transmitting culture to children. It is the family that provides affection, protection and socialization which are the basic sources for a child during the crucial years. It is also the time when he/she learns the basic behavioural patterns, habits, attitudes, customs and conventions while interacting with family members. The family instills in him/her desirable social attitudes and mould in a manner that suits the family status, reputation and psyche. Also it is the family that determines, to a great extent, a child's race, language, religion, class, and political affiliation, all of which constitute the child's self-concept.

As a social institution, the family has to perform many functions. Functioning of the family has irreplaceable importance in the process of socialization of the individual as family orients the child to initial human behaviour patterns and initial interpersonal relationships. The process of socialization remains informal at this level. Some sociologists refer to family as a mini society that acts as a transmission belt between the individual and the society. You may have observed how child rearing practices differ from family to family. Each child is unique and is uniquely inducted to the culture of his family. But there is a common consensus that warm parent-child relationship contributes to positive development outcomes. A nurturing relationship, where parents are sensitive to the needs of their children and stimulate their curiosity, can contribute positive ways to socialize them.

The child's upbringing by the family members contributes to developing respect for elders, tolerance, and adaptability. On the other hand, if socialization in the family is done in the backdrop of mistrust, autocracy and conflicts, children growing up in such family would develop anti-social behaviour.

However, it may be noted that many other factors like size of the family, socio economic background, occupation of parents, over parenting, parental neglect, and parental pressure all can affect socialization of children. The behaviours that adults in the family encourage or discourage and the type of discipline that they impose upon also impact children's orientation to life.

The parental duties get shaped in different political and historical contexts. In Japan,

for instance, a mother's role is pivotal in the socialization of her children. From the time the child is born, she moulds her/his personality so that the child fits into the outer world. In our country it is the patriarchal system that guides family function. This system marks dominance of male and of female subservience in the family. Mostly, it is the father who is the bread winner, weilds power. The women are restricted to household chores. Since childhood is the most impressionable age, the young child, who observes the roles of her/his father, mother and other members, understands their roles and later plays those roles.

Family Socialization and Adolescents

“The middle level students do not want parents that are always around, but take comfort in the fact that their parents are always around” - (Crosnoe, 2001).

Adolescent socialization is considered in the context of adolescents' interpretation of their social world and social relationship. Compared to earlier stages of infancy and childhood, there is limited opportunity for parental socialization as adolescents tend to move away into a world where they are less under the control of their parents. At this stage, friendship becomes closer and more intimate; relationship with parents shifts to relationship with peers.

Adolescents' demand for more autonomy may result in increased conflicts with parents. We tend to attribute their rebellious nature to physiological changes like puberty but the truth is that such bursts of temper and role confusion are due to cultural inconsistency. Many of conflicts between parents and adolescents arise due to the way issues are framed or defined. It may also be due to difference in the expectations with regard to social norms and conventions. Parents tend to interpret issues on the basis of what is right or wrong according to social conventions. For adolescents, such matters are associated with personal choice. For example, a parent may be annoyed by the way her adolescent son/daughter keeps the room so untidy. But for the adolescent, it is a matter of choice.

Scholars have viewed adolescence as a time of self-exploration and self-identity. Adolescents repeatedly ask themselves “who am I?”, “What is the role assigned to me?”. Such questions bother them and create identity crisis. Erikson's (1968) theory captures vividly this identity crisis. Adolescents begin to form personal beliefs and set standards for themselves. However, family socialization continues to affect their perceptions.

Gender Socialization in the Family Context

‘Rajita is a young cheerful girl studying in class VIII in Patna. She is an enthusiastic student. However, of late, she is not able to attend classes. Her mother has been ill and advised rest for a month. Her father has asked Rajita to take care of the household chores and look after her younger sister and brother. What should Rajita do? If she misses classes, she will not be able to appear for examination. If she goes to school, it will be against her father's wishes and invite anger. And who will look after her younger siblings, if she goes to school?’

In rural India, there are many such cases like that of Ranjita who are helpless because of their gender roles. Our country has a progressive education policy with respect to gender. The need for education that fosters women empowerment has been reiterated in our National Policy on Education. However, the grim reality is that discrimination is still prevalent; the sex ratio is skewed; girls' dropout rate is still high.



Fig. 3.1

Activity I

What does this picture convey?

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We know that gender identity is one of the major milestones in human development. Even at an early age, the notion of gender gets established in the child’s psyche. Gender socialization implies difference in the socialization of boys and girls. Family is the first and foremost agency where gender socialization takes place. In the course of family socialization, gender roles get demarcated. - ‘what boys and girls, and men and women are expected to do’.

In most parts of our country, the patriarchal system prevails. The unequal power relations between women and men in our society is all too obvious, whereby men are more dominant and women are often seen as subordinate and inferior to men. Boys are brought up in such a way as to conform to the male gender role, and girls that of female gender role. The practice of male-female dichotomy continues to segregate people. Actually, these gender roles are not innate but a social projection of biological sex differences. From early in life, children begin to experience gender based differentiation in all aspects of their life-be it health care nutrition, or education or their relationship with others. Not only children model parents’ behaviour, very often they are taught what they should or should not do. The special value attached to the male child is all too obvious; be it through parental reactions, parental behaviour, family rituals, practices, celebrations, folklores or songs. Problems that girls encounter are generally reflections of male dominance and women’s helplessness.

You may have also noticed that girls generally do more household chores than boys and the type of housework assigned to boys are different in nature. For example, usually it is the girl who is asked to help in the kitchen. Rarely do we come across a girl helping her father in the backyard or fixing up mechanical items in the house.

Parents exercise control over their conduct and behaviour. With the changing times attitudes also are changing. Today you can see many women rubbing shoulders with their male counterparts in all fields. Also they have started challenging male domination. As you may see, the gender discrimination is a bane creating barriers for women’s development in our society. The need of the hour is to spread awareness about gender equality in our society.

Peer Group

Have you ever wondered why socializing role of a family declines as the child grows up? One reason may be that at this stage peer group interaction soon begins to make powerful effects. Suppose your peer preference is for rap or pop song, it is inevitable that you also would prefer to listen to that kind of music though you may be fond of classical or gazal. It is because peer groups have such a major impact on our socialization. Peer group is constituted by members who have some common characteristics such as age (same stage of development and maturity) or sex, etc. It includes playmates, family members, neighbours or companions in day care centres/schools. Peers may also have interests and social position in common and hold close social proximity. For young adolescents, acceptance by peers is the most important aspect of socialization. Therefore they exhibit willingness to conform to the peer group and foster loyalty.

Peer group influence may be traced from the time a child is three or so when s/he begins to mingle with people outside the immediate family. From such an early age, children form meaningful relationships with their peers, who seem to exert influence on them. Since they mostly belong to the same age group, they tend to interact freely without inhibitions. This type of constant and unrestrained socialization with the peer group helps an individual acquire very important lessons. By becoming part of a peer group, children begin to break away from their parents' authority and learn to make friends and decisions on their own. If you happen to watch children at play you may observe how they incorporate various strategies like negotiation, dominance, leadership, cooperation, compromise, etc. without any directions from elders. Peer socialization equips them with the ability to understand the nuances of group interaction and act accordingly.

Peer influence is such that some children begin to challenge the dominant power of parents and family. It overshadows the parental influence as time goes on especially in the adolescent stage. When children realize that the standards of their peer group are not similar to the standards upheld by family they feel disillusioned. In rapidly changing societies parents are often heard complaining that their children are becoming more and more rebellious. This is true because the child refuses to accept parental authority blindly.

Peer and peer-oriented activities do become more important to the individual during adolescence. Though family continues to be the centre of teenager's social activities, she /he turns to the peer group for affection, sympathy and understanding. In their search for **identity** (finding the answers to the question, 'who am I?'), **autonomy** (discovering the self as separate and independent from other), it is the peer group that acts as a major source of support.

Adolescence also marks the onset of puberty and awareness of sexuality and sexual relations in life. Peer group socialization becomes linked to those important milestones. Curiosity about sex and sexuality is but natural and adolescents consult their peer group without any hesitation. At this stage the gender role socialization which was initiated in the family gets more reinforced.

It is interesting to observe peer influence reflected in the daily life activities of teenagers like their choice of clothing; their eating habits, hairstyles, hobbies, preference for particular type of music, games, sports, and so forth. No doubt parents are still the major source of support and inspiration for taking major decisions in life like choosing a career, life partner, etc.

Gender Socialization in Peer Groups

“Dolls are for girls. Guns are for boys.”

“No boys are allowed in our game”.

“Don’t be silly you are a boy; you cannot play with Barbie dolls”.

Very often children are heard making such statements while playing with their peers. It is interesting to note such gender socialization in peer groups. One important factor leading to gender stereotype in children is their interaction with the peer group.

If you happen to pass a school on your way, pause for a while, and observe the children in the playground. What would strike you most will be about how children form groups, the type of games they choose to engage in and the comradeship within the groups. Children exhibit marked preference for same-gendered groups. Boys tend to form larger groups, choose more physical activities and look for locations which are away from adults, or spots where there is less interference from adults. While girls prefer to play in small groups, prefer games which involve less physical activities and choose not to drift too much away from adult scrutiny. These tendencies reflect the stereotypical gender roles which they have been assigned.

Sometimes, peer influence is so much that the peer group gets the notorious label as ‘United front of dangerous influence’ underlying the negative influence of peers. But it should be borne in my mind that the developing individual is embedded in a social context where s/he experiences direct as well as indirect influences and both have a significant bearing on her/his socialization.

Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood 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 neighbourhood 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 behaviours.

It is easy to observe interdependence among people of the same locality. There may be individual differences. At the same time these residents of the same locality seek to realize common values share common traditions, folk ways and customs, socialize youth, and maintain effective social control. Thus you may understand that neighbourhood plays a major role in the socialization process.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Why do you think that socialization is vital for growing up?

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Activity 1

Talk to a few adolescents in your colony. Find out who they consider as their role models. Are they inspired by parents/close family members/relatives// teachers//celebrities from films, sports, arts, etc.? Write your reflection based on their inputs in the space provided.

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3.4.2 Meso Level Socialization: School, Religion, Social Class

Meso level units are intermediate size social units smaller than the ones at macro level but larger than the micro units like the family or the local community. It may include schools, educational institutions, political groups, etc. These organizations and institutions may not be as big as the global units but are beyond the personal experiences encountered in everyday life.

School

As a child grows, s/he is ushered into school where her/his contact with others also grows. The child’s first day in school is one of the rites of passage into Meso level unit. It is worthwhile to remember that socialization of children from infancy to adolescence occurs at a very rapid rate with family and peers exerting greatest influence at the initial stage of infancy. Thereafter, it is the school which moulds the behaviour norms of the child.

School refers to a whole range of formal educational institutions. In the words of Brubacher ‘school is an active, direct and formal agency of education and socialization’. The school has been conceived with the purpose of giving ‘heterogeneous society commonness’. School has to be seen as a conscience keeper of the society which is continuously striving to take humanity to the next higher levels of moral, intellectual and aesthetic development through engagement with children. Schools provide both formal and informal contexts for the students. The formal context is the one provided in the classroom wherein the content of socialization is determined by the curriculum and the teaching-learning process. The informal context can be perceived in the inter-personal relations of students with teachers and the peer group.

School is a miniature society where children of different families, different religions, different castes and economic status come together, take part in collective activities and learn to adjust to the society. It is in school that whatever the child has learnt hitherto through family, peer group or community gets stabilized.

As you can see, at school children are socialized with the aim of preparing them for life and to assume a role befitting a world beyond the micro units. Schools sort young people into adults’ role which are considered appropriate for them, as well as to teach them the attitudes and skills that match these thoughts.

School socialization not only helps the growing child in gaining academic insights but also many values like the importance of punctuality, discipline, resilience, team work, cooperation, etc. Another significant role played by schools is with regards to gender socialization. Although the first lessons on gender are learnt from the family, yet it is at school that the child comprehends its various dimensions. The school becomes the most important agency at this stage; simultaneously he/she is introduced to the peer group in the school and neighbourhood.

The school system functions within the society and complies with society's demands. It serves the purpose of catalyst when there is a need for reform and dynamism. At the same time it keeps a check so that cultural values of a society do not get diluted. Children who are deprived of school education therefore will have only narrow socialization unlike their counterparts in schools who have scope for greater interaction, exposure and wider socialization.

Hidden curriculum is also used as a vehicle for socialization in school. Hidden curriculum as the term implies is what children learn other than the academic content from what they do or are expected to do. Teachers and classmates shape children's attitudes towards social class, gender etc. which get reflected in their behaviour. In this way, school as an agent plays a pivotal role in the socialization of children reinforcing the habits, values, and norms which are acquired from the family and at the same time exposing them to new realms of thoughts and deeds.

Teacher as an Agent of Change

Teacher is pivotal in imparting lessons on socialization to children. S/he holds a key position in the classroom for creating and maintaining a conducive environment. S/he plays multiple roles in moulding the personality of children. By transmitting knowledge, disseminating information, inculcating values, modeling ideal behaviour, resolving conflicts, communicating positive expectations, etc. a teacher contributes to children's learning.

Although the primary responsibility of a teacher is knowledge transmission, yet teacher is an active agent of socialization. Through constant interaction during the teaching learning process, an atmosphere of trust is created in the classroom, where children can express their ambitions, share their experiences, communicate their fears and anxieties and arrive at solutions. As mentioned earlier, the teacher, the learning environment and practices within the school coalesce to affirm roles and attitudes. During the formative years when children are at the elementary level the bond between children and teachers is very close like the one they have with their parents. They look upon their teacher as an ideal person. At the adolescent stage too the role of a teacher is not less significant. A positive relationship with teachers during their turbulent years can reduce aggression, anxiety and guide them to proactive behaviour. Studies document that emotionally supportive teachers encourage academic interest, motivation and positive self-concept and help adolescents steer through the period of "stress and storm".

A teacher influences in direct as well as indirect ways. S/he can augment the process of socialization in children by modeling behaviour, communicating expectations and by reinforcing positive behaviour. As facilitator of students' socialization into the learning environment, the teacher has the potential for bringing desirable change in behaviour. Her/his role expands beyond that of instructor while s/he is engaged in student socialization.

Teachers' role as change agents is not limited to school setting and their learners. It extends beyond the school walls into communities. Teachers can and should make

efforts to reach the communities and spread awareness about various aspects like healthy habits, child rights, girl's education, women empowerment, gender equality, environmental protection, use of technology, peace, democracy, socialism, etc.

Nevertheless, it is naive to conceive the teacher social relationship as one way or as a cause-effect relationship since both the partners continuously influence each other and socialize in a reciprocal relationship. Very often it is a great experience for teachers when their students come up with novel and innovative ideas or find unique ways to arrive at solutions.

In the present day teacher needs to have many skills in her/his armour to handle "new generation packages". It is crucial that teachers are unbiased, democratic, sensitive to individual needs and are capable to counteract gender stereotypes, adopt inclusive practices, avail opportunities to participate in diverse activities, weave care and acceptance for one another in the classroom, establish connection with parents and care givers and guide their students with compassion and kindness.

Religion

Emile Durkheim defines religion "as the unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things." Those who have common beliefs and practices are united into one single moral community through religion.

Both anthropologists as well as sociologists consider religion as an inseparable part of our social being. Religion shapes collective belief into collective identity. You must have noticed how religious rituals like weddings, burials, birth day celebration and festivals bring people together wherein they express solidarity with their groups. Members of a particular religious group enjoy a sense of belongingness. It is but natural that those who are outside the group feel alienated. As one of the potential agents of socialization, religion exposes its members to spiritual world view and coaxes them to venture into a larger society.

The diversity in our country with respect to religion is so astounding. Socialization processes and practices differ from one religion to another. In most cases, children adopt the religion of their parents. Each religion follows its own rites and rituals, customs, ceremonies, dress, language, beliefs, attitudes, etc. which are in variance with those of other religions. Within the sub systems too there are differences in everyday practices. Is it not amusing to watch marriage ceremonies in various religions; each one unique to each religion? These ideological differences are transmitted to the members of the different sects through the socializing process. Although of late the external symbols like the dress or language have become more or less uniform, yet there are differences in the process.

Religion inspires an individual to serve for the welfare of her/his community and society. Since the spiritual thread of religion is closely interwoven with an individual's life pattern, much of his/her behaviour is controlled by it. For example, children are taught various moral principles and values, which they have to adhere to in everyday transaction. A sense of fear is injected in their minds, whereby they would rather follow the rules and principles than face the consequences or punishment. Religion underlines the qualities of piety, truth, solidarity and harmony among human beings.

Unfortunately, many wars are fought in the name of religion. Though the underlying message of all religion is the belief in one supreme power, yet narrow minded and anti-social elements indulge in unethical and socially irresponsible activities bringing untold miseries to humanity. As social beings, it is our supreme duty to respect each religion's value, each member's preference for particular religious ideologies and, at the same time, celebrate secularism.

Social Class

The role of social class in socialization cannot be ignored. There is a close link between socialization and social class. Social class is neither legally defined nor religiously sanctioned. It is generally said to be a stratum of people occupying similar positions, wealth and income. Our society is sorted or layered into several social classes. The way society's resources are distributed is uneven across these layers. The top layers are occupied by people who have more resources and the lower layers are represented by people who have lesser resources. A social class is marked by a set of people who share similar status with regard to factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation. Each of these classes has its own beliefs, attitudes, opinions and world views. So it is but natural that a child born to a particular class will be socialized by the norms dictated by the social class, which, in turn, are guided by property relations. Here the class role becomes the primary determinant of the way socialization process is carried out and a potential agent in shaping the contours of individuals. Position in the class system virtually affects every aspect of life, be it education, political affiliation, job preference or sexual behaviour.

Social class is relevant even in the context of goal setting. Working class or lower class parents teach their children that success is dependent on conforming to authority. But children of middle class are directed towards future goals. Their parents emphasize the need for success in studies and reinforce the function of schools as vital agencies of socialization. Within a particular social class child rearing practices may not be the same.

Sometimes children may be affected by difference in values upheld by the family and the school. At home cognitive development of a child is not given priority whereas in school academic performance is emphasized. Such children are in a state of perpetual confusion. Again, a relationship is seen between the occupational role of the father and the difference in the socialization-orientations of the children. For instance, since a working-class father enjoys less freedom and satisfaction in the work situation, s/he tends to be strict towards his family members, especially his son.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: (a) Write your answer in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

- i) Observe children playing in your neighbourhood park. Do you notice any difference in how boys and girls form groups or the type of games they play? Prepare a note on it.

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3.4.3 Macro Level Socialization: Global Community, Electronic Media, Social Networking

Macro level comprises larger units. Here we look at entire nation, global forces and international units.

Global Community

We live in an age of inventions and innovations. Today every aspect of our life is

undergoing a sea change. Technology has taken tremendous strides transforming our lives. Our globe has shrunk, geographical boundaries are disappearing, distances have been reduced, and communication network has brought the people all over the world together eliminating barriers of caste, race or region. We are reconfiguring the communication dynamics and moving towards a global community or a global village.

These days it is easily noticeable how increased access to information is giving rise to increase in cultural opportunities to the “masses” of humanity. Historically, cultural opportunities were the privilege of the reasonably rich or affluent. Now the vista is wide open with many such opportunities from around the world easily available, leading to greater scope for socialization.

Let us examine how mass media and social networking are accelerating the socialization process.

MASS MEDIA.

Can you imagine how your life would be without the printed words, television, radio, mobile phones? Impossible, isn't it?

Such is the power of Mass media.

So far, you have read how society influences young minds through parents, schools, and peers, yet another agent of socialization which is worth considering is Mass Media. Today, the dynamics of rapid changes can be felt in every society and every institution. This, in turn, necessitates the forging of new social forms and new methods of communication like the mass media. The mass media is a vehicle for spreading information on a massive scale and reaching to a vast audience or a large number of people. The term *media* is derived from the Latin word for “middle,” suggesting that media connect people. The media is instrumental in defining what we think, how we look upon our social place and issues in the society.

The mass media comprises both the print media such as books, newspapers, magazines, etc., and also non-print media such as radio, television, and movies. The goal is to reach out to the mass or large number of people without establishing any personal contact between senders and receivers. It permeates into all aspects of society, be it political, linguistic, cultural or spiritual. Media is all pervasive; its functioning is very subtle and has both positive and negative influences.

In this millennium age there is onslaught of media. Our environment is supersaturated with various types of media giving rise to many debates and discussions- Does the content of television programs and video games make children more aggressive? Does such exposure make them less sensitive? Is television turning children into introverts? Is intense media exposure detrimental to academic success? In trying to answer such questions, we have to be careful not to go over board by exaggerating its advantages or to criticize it for its harmful nature. In order to understand this, let us take the case of television.

In the last few decades, children have been dramatically socialized by one source in particular i.e. television. Now, virtually, every home has at least one television set. The influence of television as a potent agent of socialization can be understood if you read the following case :

Shin Chan was banned in India on 4th December 2008. Parents are worried about the unruly comments and acts shown on the Shin Chan cartoon show. The cartoon series shows a naughty five-year-old boy making the life of his parents miserable. ‘The series was having a negative impact on

kids. The character does things which are prohibitory in India,” said a mother of two. Anxieties of Indian parents are not unfounded.

(Source: Sengupta, Rajit. (2008, December 04). India bans telecasting of Shin Chan. Merinews. Retrieved from http://myshinchan.hpage.co.in/shinchan-was-banned-in-india_41280135.html).

It only highlights the adverse effects of excessive Television watching especially violence. Although most research in television has been on the influence of television on anti-social behaviour, especially violence, yet we cannot deny that children obtain considerable political and social information from television; a judicious use of the same can yield fruitful dividends. Books too can influence the readers through its contents. But, sometimes gender stereotypes also creep in through the protagonists and illustrations in stories and anecdotes.

In this context it is worthwhile to discuss the role of Electronic Media.

Electronic Media

In a developing country like ours, television and computers have become very important agencies of socialization. We have already seen the influence of television on the young minds. Internet and cell phones are increasingly establishing commonness and connectedness among people all over the world. Now children are getting exposed to a world beyond their homes and community to the global community and are being socialized in such a way that they fit into a global world.

Social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. open up a new world altogether and expose the child’s mind into different cultures that he or she did not know and are introduced to a whole new world. The progress from Orkut to Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tumblr, have been so rapid that by the time one learns the nitty-gritty of one such site, he/she is bombarded with another. The accesses to such sites are not only through mass media on our computers but are easily available on our iPads and cell phones.

Social Networking and Virtual Communities

In Australia a campaign named one million was launched in the website in 2009. The aim was to build a movement of strong, inspirational women and girls acting on climate change by leading low carbon lives. Through the website Natalie Issacs, one Million founder appealed to women to join the campaign, “I BELIEVE A MILLION WOMEN WILL TELL A MILLION MORE AND LEAD A MILLION COMMUNITIES.” Its impact was astounding. One Million Women has grown to become Australia’s largest women’s environmental organization committed to cut more than 100,000 tons of carbon pollution. Such is the impact of social networking and virtual communities.

Social Networking

Social networking implies the use of internet based social media programmes in order to make connections with one’s family members, friends, classmates, clients or customers. It provides a platform for people to share their common interests, likes and dislikes and build social contacts. This is facilitated by Multimedia and the new electronic communication technologies, such as emails and the Internet.

Virtual communities are online communities where people across the world can be brought together through social media. They are small aggregations of people with common ideas, interests, etc. sharing cyberspace. No doubt the cell phones are

packed with Apps, Selfies and Emojis. However, research shows that new communication technologies not only reinforce our social connections but deepen them as well. Communication satellites, cable networks, computer systems, and their usages and ideas have become indispensable to modern living.

Some may argue that online communities tend to replace traditional communities but that is not so. In fact they only supplement them. In this age of information explosion, being socialized into the competent use of new communication technologies becomes essential. Individual networks of relationships can be built with and without face-to-face interactions.

Locating childhood friends, forming groups, getting updates minute by minute are all possible, thanks to the digital media network.

New communication technologies allow for new and different forms of sociability. Youngsters find it more appealing compared to traditional ones because one can be choosy depending on own likes and dislikes. In virtual communities, gender, race and other ascribed statuses are irrelevant. However, on the flip side, one must be warned against getting drowned in the massive sweep. The Central Bureau of Investigation raised a warning against the pervasive presence of pornography on internet which led to degeneration of social values among the youth. This also can be correlated to the rampant prevalence of crimes related to sexual assault in our country (The Times of India, Oct 11, 2015). Despite the negative influences, global units like Mass media, Electronic media and Virtual communities continue to contribute to the socialization process.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: (a) Write your answers in the space given below.

(b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

i) Fill in the blanks

- a) Mass Media includes _____ and _____
- b) Virtual communities are also known as _____ communities
- c) Examples of virtual communities are _____, _____ and _____

ii) Explain how new communication technologies allow for new and different forms of sociability.

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed the basic concept of socialization as a lifelong process and how it is carried out by various agents. We introduced you to the various agencies of socialization and clarified how each agency contributes to the moulding of an individual's personality. The agents of socialization have been classified into Micro, Meso and Macro level and the process at each level spelled out. At the Micro level, family, peer group and neighbourhood are the major agencies of socialization. Family

plays a pivotal role in socialization. We have also discussed at length about adolescents' socialization in the family. At the Meso level, the role of other agencies like school, religion, social class becomes significant. School is a miniature society where children of different families, religions, castes and economic status come together; partake in collective activities and learn to adjust to the society. Here, a teacher as an agent of socialization assumes importance. We have also discussed gender socialization at each level. The role of religion is very powerful; so is the interaction with the social class. At the Macro level, the impact of mass media and electronic media have been explained by citing examples. Social networking not only facilitates socialization, but also enhances the ability to understand others in a better way.

3.6 UNIT -END EXERCISES

1. What is socialization? What are the phases of socialization?
2. Why is family said to be the most important agent of socialization?
3. Discuss the role of school as an agency of socialization?
4. Mention the various types of Mass Media.

3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. i) Man is a social animal. He cannot live in isolation. S/he constantly interacts with others through various agencies. This way socialization contributes in moulding one's personality. Lack of socialization would hinder growth and development. Hence socialization is vital.
2. i) Write your own observation.
3. i)
 - a. Print Media, Non print Media
 - b. Online communities
 - c. Facebook, Twitter
- ii) New communication technologies allow for new and different forms of sociability. Unlike the traditional methods of communication, individual networks of relationships can be built with and without face-to-face interactions. Moreover the advancement in communication technology has brought people closer. Now locating childhood friends, forming groups, getting updates minute by minute all are possible due to the digital media network. Again individuals can exert their choice. Also in virtual communities, gender, race and other ascribed statuses are irrelevant.

3.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

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