

Preface

Human beings are social creatures and in their daily life they are interdependent. Their relations with each other form the base of the society. In the earlier chapters, we tried to understand the human society. If there is any fundamental difference between human society and animal society it is that of culture. While the former has culture, the latter lacks it. Culture is a unique characteristic of human society and therefore, for the students of sociology, it is essential to understand its meaning and features as an important element which distinguishes human and animal society. It is important to understand culture also because human behaviour, interaction, social relations, status, role, groups and institutions and the process of socialization - all are influenced by culture. In this chapter we will also learn about socialization which is a continuous process carried on by different agencies in the society.

Meaning of culture

In simple words, "Culture is a way of life".

In the 19th century, the word culture was used to denote people's life style. It contained all types of life styles including rural, urban, and tribal, of white people, of Hindus or Muslims or of the modern day people. In brief, culture meant life style in the 19th century. In 20th century the word culture was used in the context of the whole social heritage. Social heritage means distinct life style of a group life which includes the knowledge obtained by the members, beliefs, customs, skills etc. Culture does not include only art, music and literature but also the methods and devices of constructing buildings, stitching clothes, making earthen pots etc.

Definition of culture

According to Malinowski, "Culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values".

Sociologist Taylor defines culture as a "complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, customs and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society".

Features of culture

Features of culture are as follows:

- (1) Culture is a way of life.
- (2) Culture is a learned behaviour.
- (3) Culture is a distinct product of human social life.
- (4) Culture is pervasive, evolutionary and changeable.
- (5) Culture can be transmitted.
- (6) Culture is accumulated.

Types of culture

The intellectual, spiritual and artistic heritage of human society is known as 'culture'. Sociologist Ogburn divides culture into two parts: (1) Material culture and (2) Non-material culture.

(1) Material culture : "Material culture" means the "aspect of physical matters" of culture. All those objects which are tangible and observable are "material culture". Man has been producing material objects to satisfy his needs from the beginning of civilization. Sociologist Robert Bierstedt includes machines, means, vessels, buildings, roads, bridges, artefacts, clothes, vehicles, furnishings, food items, medicines etc. in material objects. These objects are important for human existence. Man makes attempts to obtain these objects and in this process he strengthens his relations with others.

(2) Non-material culture : Sociologists perceive non-material culture as important as material culture and signify it more. Non-material culture consists of the elements which have no material existence. It can be divided into two sub-sections: (a) Cognitive and (b) Normative.

a. Cognitive : Cognitive culture refers to the knowledge about how to use certain means or equipment to produce some work from the nature.

b. Normative : Normative culture consists of norms, rules, values and dos and don'ts imposed by the society.

Folkways, customs, taboos, laws etc. are certain important norms. Folkways are methods of behaviour which are intuitively accepted by the society and are in practice. For example, the practices of handshake or bowing to welcome someone. Customs are those folkways which are considered most important from the viewpoint of public welfare and morality. For example, the society considers marriage between brother and sister as immoral. Laws are the rules which are accepted by the courts of the state, interpreted and implemented in certain conditions. For example, The Special Marriage Act, 1954, property related acts etc. The punishment for violation of laws ranges from a mere rebuke to the death sentence.

Civilization

Different viewpoints prevail regarding the meaning of civilization. Though there is not much difference between culture and civilization, the thin line differentiating the two cannot be ignored.

Meaning of civilization

Culture is a way of life which includes all that obtained through knowledge, beliefs, art, ethics, laws, customs etc. and civilization is accumulation of all those objects which are necessary for life and the social system which differentiate human society from other than human society. Take for example, the civilization of Indus Valley.

Differentiating culture and civilization, sociologist MacIver mentions that culture is 'society's evaluative creations, such as literature, sculptures, art etc. are known as culture. What we are, is civilization and what we have is culture.

The process of civilization leads to development of methods for realization of certain motives. For example, in ancient time, men used stones to light the fire while in the present time match- stick or lighter is used for the same purpose. Here, stones and match-stick are known as 'means' and the

'fire' is the aim. Thus, in the process of development, stones were replaced by match-sticks. This and the satisfaction men derived from this development are known as civilization. Thus, civilization includes the development of techniques and useful material objects which men carried out for improving their condition.

Scope of civilization

Scope of civilization can be divided into two sections: (1) Mechanical organization and (2) Social organization.

Material and technical objects such as means of transportation, TV, car, fan, roads, railway etc. are included in mechanical organization.

Social organization regulates behaviour, practices and progress of human beings and it includes different families, groups, caste and class systems, social and economic organizations etc.

Socialization

Human relations which are essential for the formation of society persist from the beginning of the life till its end. The developing process of these relations is known as socialization. In other sense, the process of socialization is known as the process of learning.

Meaning of socialization

Socialization is a process which persists for life-time of an individual. In simpler words, "Socialization is known as a process which moulds a biological organism into a social man. As a result of socialization, man, as a member of society, learns to live according to social expectations. A child learns about norms, values, sentiments, roles and methods of behaviour of its society through the process of socialization and then sets in the cultural structure of its society and becomes capable of fulfilling social expectations. Thus, socialization is a process that shapes the social and cultural life of a child.

Socialization is a process, through which an individual learns habits, skills, beliefs, conscience, which are essential for effective participation in social groups and sects. Without socialization, society cannot persist or culture cannot exist.

Definitions of socialization

Sociologists have defined socialization as follows:

According to Kingsley Davis: "The process of shaping a newborn child as a social individual is known as the process of socialization".

According to Horton and Hunt: Socialization is the process whereby one internalizes norms of his groups, so that a distinct "self emerges, unique to this individual".

Agencies of socialization

In the life of an individual, beginning from the childhood till its end, many agencies are instrumental in his/her socialization. Among them, important roles are played by family, peer group and school. Let us try to understand the roles of these agencies in socialization.

(1) Family : In all cultures of the world, family has been fundamental and important agency of socialization. First of all, the child comes into contact with the family. Through the relations of mother-father and brother-sister a child converts into a social individual from a biological organism. In most of the cultures, mother plays an important role in the socialization of the child. Mother or father, through love, affection and warmth instills the feeling of social and mental security in the child's mind which is very important for the development of personality. Family provides necessary norms and guidance to the child relating to code of conduct and by convincing or by pressure it makes the child follow the norms. Through relations with brother and sister the child learns the lessons of equality.



Family

Family teaches the child the fundamental values of the society, norms, ways of behaving and acquaints him/her with the knowledge of common practices, traditions, customs, etc. Thus family teaches the child all necessary and important things of cultural heritage through the process of socialization.

In the modern time working mother feels herself more responsible for the overall development of the child. The cultural and economic status of the family also affects the process of socialization.

Difference is found in the behaviour of children raised in conservative family and those raised in liberal family.

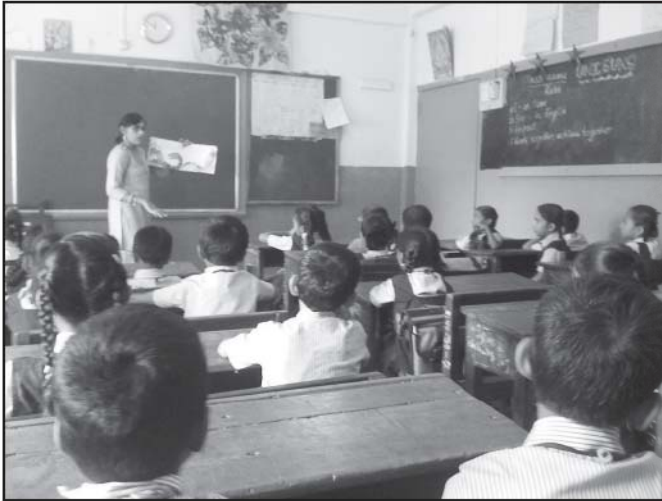


Peer group

(2) Peer group : The second agency for socialization of the child is peer group or group of friends. The child interacts with friends and counterparts and gets socialized in the process. Being proximate, the child develops a close, personal and compassionate relation with friends and learns discipline, way of behaving and talking, rules and norms. Such groups can be in neighbourhood and also in school. In child's relations with his/her friends, atmosphere of democracy and equality assume importance because these relations are not of authority and

subordination but are based on equality. By following the rules of games while playing, the child also perceives the idea of how to follow laws and norms of the wider society. Also, being a member of the group, a feeling of mutual cooperation is developed among children. Further, the sportsmanship of waiving things for each other also develops among them.

If the group of child's friends follows the norms and rules of the society, it becomes an effective means of socialization of the child. Children influence each other significantly. Child absorbs good behaviour from group of friends with good habits, thoughts, knowledge and skills. Socialization is accurately expressed by the Gujarati proverb, '*sobat evi asar*' which can be roughly translated in English as 'A man is influenced by the company he keeps'.



School

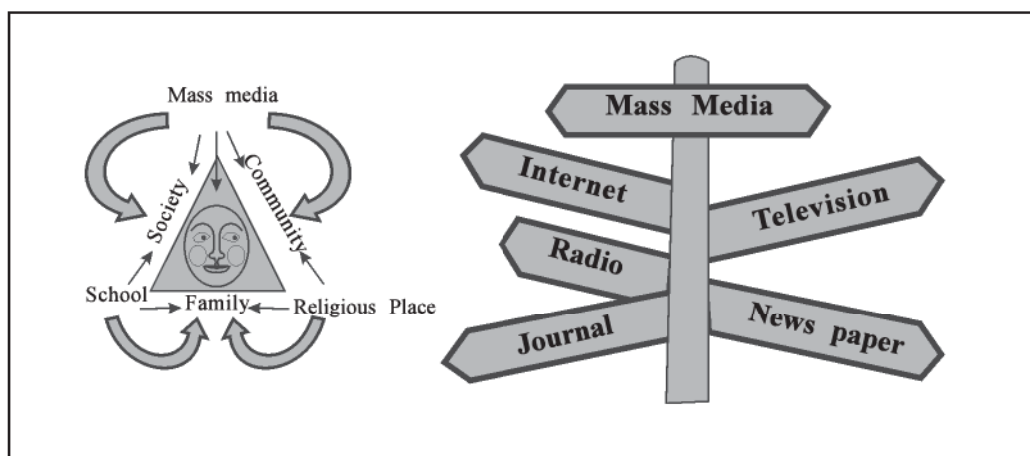
(3) School : School is a formal system with a fixed syllabus and in this context student gets socialized. School acquaints the child with some fundamental knowledge of different subjects and skills and also with social, economic and political systems and important social problems. Further, school prepares the child for professional roles and social mobility by imparting vocational training.

By introducing different personalities under extracurricular activities, school acquaints children with diverse experiences and also inspires them for achievement, which is very

necessary for the development of modern society. Thus, school as a formal medium, plays an important role in socialization of the new generation.

Children not going to school and dropouts from school are deprived of the benefit of socialization which occurs through school.

(4) Mass-media : In the world, beginning from the end of the 18th century till now, there has been a continuous development of print media such as newspapers, journals etc. In the present time,



Mass-media

mediums like TV, internet, mobile phones have made information and recreation readily available. Mediums like newspapers, films, radio, TV, internet, mobile phone are known as 'mass-media' in

English. In Gujarati, they are known as mediums of '*Pratyayan*'. Mass-media have been playing an important role for the socialization of all of us. Through presenting various kinds of information, these mediums enrich our knowledge and moreover, they socialize others by presenting our opinions, beliefs, thoughts, ideals etc. to them. While print media influence literate people, audio-video mediums influence both literate and illiterate people and also those living in distant places.

With recreation, TV programmes also impart knowledge. Information, events, behaviour and practices telecast by TV are remembered for a long time. Children are more influenced by TV programmes. Numerous advertisements shown in TV persuade people to become customers of different goods and services. In the present time, internet and social media are also playing an important role in the process of socialization.

These mediums provide information and understanding about different groups, culture, problems, processes etc. through which socialization of people occurs.

(5) Other agencies of socialization : Besides family, peer group, school, and mass-media, let us get acquainted with some other agencies of socialization.

The work place of individual plays an important role in socialization. In relation to occupation or job individual needs to visit different places. Places like factory, office, market, etc. also play significant role in the process of socialization. In the modern industrial society, development of education and science has accelerated the process of socialization of both men and women, particularly in urban areas.

To understand the fact that man is a social being, we tried to understand 'culture and socialization'. We obtained information about the process of socialization which transforms a biological organism into a social individual and its main agencies like family, peer group, school, mass-media etc. Various institutions of society play eminent role in overall socialization of people. We will learn in detail about these institutions in the next chapter.

Exercises

1. Answer the following questions in detail :

- (1) Explain the meaning and types of culture with examples.
- (2) What is socialization? Explain the role of family and peer group as agencies of socialization.

2. Answer the following questions concisely :

- (1) Explain the meaning and scope of civilization.
- (2) Explain mass-media as an important agency of socialization.
- (3) Explain school as an important agency of socialization.

3. Answer the following questions in short :

- (1) Define civilization.
- (2) What is material culture? What does it include?
- (3) Describe mediums of communication.
- (4) Describe features of culture.

4. Answer the following questions in one sentence :

- (1) What is culture ?
- (2) How has the anthropologist Malinowski defined culture ?
- (3) Give the definition of culture given by Taylor.
- (4) What is civilization ?
- (5) What is meant by socialization ?
- (6) Give the definition of socialization given by Kingsley Davis.
- (7) Which kinds of atmosphere assume importance in child's relation with friends ?

5. Choose the right option from the following and write :

- (1) What is formed by combination of norms and values ?
(a) Family (b) State (c) Individual (d) Culture
- (2) What is included in material culture ?
(a) Buildings (b) Religion (c) Literature (d) Art
- (3) What is included in non-material culture ?
(a) Food (b) Language
(c) Clothing (d) Means of transportation
- (4) Who accomplishes the fundamental work of socialization in all cultures of the world ?
(a) Family (b) State (c) Individual (d) Culture
- (5) What is known as medium of communication ?
(a) Television (b) Family (c) School (d) Peer group
- (6) The developing process of human relations is known as
(a) Socialization (b) Atmosphere (c) Values (d) Society

Activity

- Organize a discussion to know students' views on how socialization of child occurs through school.
- Organize an essay competition on impact of mass-media on child in the modern time.
- Make a list of features of different cultures visible in people living in your area and if possible collect related photographs and organize their exhibition.

