UNIT 5: SOCIALIZATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

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5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- define socialization
- discuss the agents of socialization
- define social control
- identify the importance of social control in social life
- understand different forms of social control
- identify social norms and its importance in society
- explain folkways and mores and realise the distinction between folkways and mores.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we had discussed the forms of social stratification with special focus on the caste and class system. In this unit, let us discuss what is meant by socialization, social control and their various dimensions. Socialisation is an important process (predominately an unconscious process), through which a new born child learns about the values, beliefs, rules, regulations of the society. In the process, socialisation helps in internalising the culture into the child. Social control is very important in social life as it provides social solidarity by working in consensus within the boundaries of societal norms. While going deeper into the unit we will also get to know about different means of social control and their different characteristics and need. In this unit, we will also discuss in detail the concept of norms, folkways and mores.

5.3 SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is the basic social process through which an individual becomes integrated into a social group by learning the group's culture and his role in that social group. Socialization, includes learning of three important processes: (1) cognitive; (2) affective, and (3) evaluative. In other words, socialization includes the knowledge of how things are caused and the establishment of emotional links with the rest of the members of the society. Socialization, therefore, equips an individual in such a way that he can perform his duties in his society.

Some important defintions of socialisation are:

MacIver defines socialisation as the process by which social beings establish wider and profounder relationships with one another, in which they became more bound up with one another, and more perceptive of the personality of themselves and of other and buildup the complex structure of nearer and wider association.

According to Rose and Glazer, "socialisation is the process of learning of beliefs, values, patterns and social roles of society and culture, "

As defined by Horton and Hunt, " socialisation is the process whereby one internalises the norms of his group, so that distinct 'self' emerges, unique to this individual. "

Bogardus puts forward that, "socialisation is the process through which a man develops into a social being. " Further Ogburn defined socialisation as "the process by which an individual learns to conform to the norms of the groups. "

Thus, socialisation is the process in which a biological individual changes into a social being.

However socialisation is different from 'sociality'. Whereas sociality is a quality, socialisation is a process. Sociality may mean the capacity to mix with others, to enter into relations with others easily and comfortably. In the process of socialisation human beings acquire the quality of sociality.



Socialisation is the process through which a man develops into a 'Social being.'

Socialisation is also different from 'maturation.' Maturation refers primarily to the physical and chemical process of development. It is the growing up and gradual changing of the organism.

After we have discussed the different definitons of socialisation, we need to understand the importance of socialisation in a person's life.

- Socialization converts man, the biological being into man, the social being.
- Socialization contributes to the development of personality.
- Socialisation helps the person to become disciplined.
- Socialisation helps the individual to enact different roles.
- It also provides the knowledge of skills.
- It helps to develop right aspiration in life.
- Socialisation contributes to the stability of the social order.
- It helps to reduce social distance
- Socialisation provides scope for building a bright future, by turning individuals into responsible members of the society.

Socialisation plays a very significant role in the person's life. It helps him develop into a social being. Along with the importance, in the next section we will discuss about the agencies of socialisation. Socialisation is a continuous process, and the agencies of socialisation are related to

individual's age.

5.3.1 AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

The agencies of socialization are the mediums through which this process takes place.They are family, the school, friends or peer groups, religion, neighbourhood or neighbours and the state.

- Family: Family is the most important primary group that brings about socialisation in an infant. The parent or the family is the first to socialise the child. From the parents he learns his speech and language. The child gets his first lessons of cooperation, tolerance, self-sacrifice, love and affection in the family. The environment of the family influences the growth of a child.
- The School (educational institutions): The school is the second agency of socialisation. In the school, the child gets his education that moulds his ideas and attitudes. A good education can make the child a good citizen, while a bad education or lack of education can turn him into a criminal or deviant. Education is thus of great importance in the process of socialisation.
- Friends or Peer Groups: This is also an important agency of socialisation. The relation between the child and his playmates or friends is one of mutual understanding or equality. They are mostly of similar age, and hence information is shared in an informal manner. While with parents there's some sort of restriction, but with friends this is generally not there. Hence it helps the child to better equip oneself in the society.
- Religion: Religion plays a significant role in the socialisation process. Religion provided a bond of unity in the early society. Even in the present context religion continuously shapes and influences our beliefs and ways of life. The religious practices in the family influences the child and his belief system. He listens to religious sermons which may determine his course of life and further shape his ideas.
- Neighbourhood or neighbours: From the neighbours also the child

learns about the social values and the art of adjusting with others.

- The State: The state is an authoritarian agency. It makes laws for the people and lays down the modes of conduct expected of them. The people have compulsions to obey these laws. These laws in turn, shapes and mould the infividual's behaviour.



ACTIVITY

What role did socialisation play in shaping your life?

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Among all the agencies of socialisation, which one do you think is more influential?

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are three important processes within socialisation?

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Q 2: Why is social control emportant for a society ?

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5.4 SOCIAL CONTROL

Social control constitutes the very foundation of our social life. Now let us begin our discussion with the concept of social control. The society in which we live should exist in harmony and order, without which life of the individual will be under threat. In order to maintain this harmony and order there are some social rules which plays a great role to regulate social order. Social control thereby can be understood as social rules and mechanisms that regulate individual and group behaviour. This in return helps to attain conformity and compliance which again helps to maintain the peace and harmony of the entire society.

In order to keep all the things in place and order, each of us should behave in a regulated way. But to behave in a regulated manner, is often challenging as all individuals can never be alike. They differ in their thoughts, cultures, values, likes and dislikes etc. If every individual is allowed to do according to their wish the society will be in chaos, as different individuals will go in different direction and believe them to be right. So, to get rid of such situations, society has certain rigid rules to reduce the differences between people and help them select what is believed to be right. Such rules are set by the society to make the individuals unite in one common faith and belief. In order to maintain this consensus over and over again, social control is regarded as an essential social device.



Social Control is the sum of those methods which a society tries to influence human behaviour to maintain a given order.

Social control is often noticed through public ridicule, group disregard, public opinion etc. For example drinking and then beating wife, is not appreciated in our society. A person doing such an act is controlled by social ridicule, as well as social disrespect. The people who have suffered from such public ridicule are seen as modifying their unpleasant behavior. There are also other such behaviours, which are controlled through the various means of social control like mockery, teasing, public fun etc.

Social control is thereby understood as a social tool to guide the individual to follow an unanimous path which is also essential for a healthy society. The tools of social control are norms, values, folkways, mores etc. which are followed by every individual to maintain social order.

According to Mannheim 'Social control is the sum of those methods by which a society tries to influence human behavior to maintain a given order'.

According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, 'Social control is the pattern of pressure that a society exerts to maintain order and establish rules'.

According to Kimball Young, 'the aims of social control are to bring about conformity, solidarity and continuity of a particular group or society'.

5.5 MEANS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

We have already understood that society in order to exist and progress has to exercise a certain control over its members since any marked deviation from the established ways is considered a threat to its welfare. Such control can be grouped systematically into two types. They are

- Informal means of social control and
- Formal means of social control

a. Informal Means of Social Control

Informal social controls are more definite in small societies and are more noticed among primary groups where interaction is on personal basis. Informal means of control is the reaction of the individuals and groups when something is not believed to be right,that bring conformity to the norms and values of the society.For example community pressure, Sympathy, sociability, resentment, the sense of justice, public opinion, folkways and mores are some of the informal means of social control. Informal means, like praise, ridicule, boycott etc. effectively control ones behavior.

5.5.1 NORMS

Norms are an important means of social control and no society can exist without norms. Norms had made it possible to maintain the social order and it works well as a system of check for those who have deviated from the normal societal behaviours.

A norm is a specific guide to action which is accepted as an appropriate behavior in a particular situation. It can be defined as the established

standards of behaviour through which a group live by. For a norm to become significant, it must be widely shared and understood. For example, in movie theaters, we expect that people will be quiet while the film is shown. Of course, the application of this norm can vary, depending on the particular film and type of audience. People who are viewing a serious artistic film will be more likely to insist on the norm of silence than those who are watching a slapstick comedy or horror movie.

The social norms indicate the established and approved ways of doing things; of dress, of speech as well as of appearance. Social norms can also be viewed as statements that regulate behaviour and act as informal social controls. If the social norms are ignored, then there is risk involved for the person of becoming unacceptable, unpopular or even an outcast from a group. During the process of socialization the norms of society are inculcated within the individual.

M. Sherif describes norms as the common standards or ideas which guide member's responses in all established groups. The concept of norm is closely associated with roles. Each individual's roles within a social group are defined by that group's social norms.

Broom and Selznick describes norms as a "blueprint for behaviour, setting limits within which individual may seek alternate ways to achieve their goals. "

According to Robert Bierstedt, "a norm is a rule or standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate" . He further writes that a norm can be treated as "a cultural specification that guides our conduct in society. "

Characteristics of Norms

- Norms are universal.
- Norms are enforced by positive and negative sanction which may be formal or informal.
- Norms are the blueprints of behaviour.
- Norms help in maintaining social order.
- Norms incorporate value judgments.

After we have discussed the concept of norm and its characteristics, in the next section we will discuss the concepts of folkways and mores. Folkways and mores are two types of norms which a society follows. The details of which are discussed below.



ACTIVITY

What norms are to be followed while greeting an elderly person and while meeting up with a close friend?

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5.5.2 FOLKWAYS

Folkways are simply the customary, normal habitual ways of a group. For example shaking hands while greeting a person or using spoon while eating are some examples of folkways. They are the behaviour patterns of everyday life, which arise spontaneously and unconsciously in a group. Folkways basically provide traditional definitions in relation to proper ways of behaving in a particular society or social group; conformity to which automatically occurs without any rational analysis. But they are not as important or obligatory as mores. The violation of folkways is not severely sanctioned.

Folkways are not definite and final. There are different societies which have different workable pattern of folkways. As in western societies shaking hands is ideal for greeting person, while in India to greet people one have to fold hands together. Both the ways are workable and correct in two different contexts.

It is understood that folkways have some degree of traditional sanction. They are the foundation of a group culture and helps in building of different behaviour patterns within culture. Although denial of such behaviour does

not specify punishment still it is not easy for the members of a group to violate the folkways. If an individual does not follow them he may be socially boycotted by his own group. Cultural forms of dress or food habits are examples of folkways. For instance, it is culturally inappropriate to belch at the dinner table, however if this folkway is broken, there are no moral or legal consequences. Eventually, folkways become a matter of habit, and these are followed unconsciously. Folkways exercise powerful influence over a man's behaviour in society.

According to W.G.Sumner, folkways are like the products of natural forces which men unconsciously set in and which are handed down by tradition and admit no variation yet changes to meet some new conditions that do exist. From this it results that the life of human beings in all ages and stages of culture is primarily controlled by a vast mass of folkways handed down from the earlier generation.



Folkways
are powerful tools of social control that become a matter of habit and are followed unconsciously.

According to Lundberg, folkways designate those uniformities in the behaviour of a group which develop spontaneously and unconsciously in adapting to common life conditions established through repetition and general occurrences.

Characteristics of Folkway

- Folkways arise spontaneously. They are not deliberately planned or designed. They are developed out of experience.
- Folkways are the recognized ways of behavior. The group agrees to some behaviour while rejects others.
- There are numerous folkways in different societies .The folkways become related to a particular group. There is considerable variation in the folkways between groups.
- Folkways are passed on from one generation to another. An individual receives folkways from his ancestors.
- Folkways do not meet with severe social sanction. The violation of folkways can never be an offence, but it creates problems to social consensus.

After we have discussed about folkways, next we will discuss the concept of mores.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What are the risks involved if social norms are violated?

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Q 4: With the help of an example, explain how folkways are practiced differently in different contexts?

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5.5.3 MORES

Mores are a set of group belief that define the most fundamental ideas about what is to be considered as right or wrong within human behavior. Mores are believed to be highly necessary for the welfare of a society, because they represent the most valued principles of people. Each society demands obedience to its mores; violation of which can lead to severe penalties.

Mores are the norms which are crucial for the maintenance and sustenance of the society. It provides the moral and ethical standards of behaviour of a group or a society. Group members feel an emotional attachment to the mores and their preservation is considered essential to the group's welfare. All mores are basically ideas which approve of certain acts and forbid others in the belief that group welfare is being protected.

Mores consist of shared understandings about the kinds of behavior likely to evoke approval, disapproval, toleration or sanction, within particular contexts. For example, killing someone, breaking traffic rules, cheating in school is morally disapproved.

According to William Graham Sumner, 'Mores are the folkways which

are considered by the group to be of great significance and therefore rather indispensable to its welfare' . According to him mores are widely observed as they have greater moral significance than others.

Functions of Mores

- Mores are the ethical instruments to control group behaviour. In society there are innumerable mores like monogamy, anti-slavery, democracy and prohibition conformity to which is regarded as necessary.
- By conforming to the mores the individual gains identification with his fellows and maintains social bonds which are essential for satisfactory living.
- The mores hold the members of the groups together. They are held in line by the constraints of mores.
- There is a sense of unreflecting solidarity among people who share the same mores because their sentiments are alike. It also implies that there is a sense of resistance and antagonism towards anyone with different mores.

Distinction between Mores and Folkways

- Folkways are of a more general and wider character than mores.
- Mores are more effective and are always molding and restraining the tendencies of the individuals than the folkways.
- Unlike folkways, mores help us to clearly understand the distinction between right and wrong.
- Folkways are less deeply rooted in society and change more rapidly than the mores which are more deeply rooted and change less frequently.
- Folkways change with one's social status and occupational position but mores do not change that way.
- The violations of mores but not of the folkways are looked upon as an evident danger to the right of others.

b. Formal Means of Social Control

In modern large communities informal means of control has less impact on human behavior as they share large number of impersonal relations. Therefore praise, ridicule, public opinion has less impact on individual's behavior. Hence in modern time informal means of control have given place to formal means of social controls. Formal means of social controls are the laws, education, coercion, codes etc. As societies grew in size or in complexity, they were compelled to formulate rules and regulations, which define the types of behavior by law, education and coercion.

5.6 SOCIALIZATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Socialization is a process by which people learn the norms and values of their culture - how to behave "correctly" in their society. Sociologists also argue that it is through socialization that the society's culture is internalized by the individual.

Socialization is an incredibly powerful process infact, that most of the time we happily conform to the norms of society without even realizing it. Therefore socialization is regarded as the effective means of social control. During the process of socialization the process of social control also is in operation. Through socialization social control becomes effective.

However, occasionally, people act in a way that does not correspond to the expectations of society. Consequently, society needs a range of positive and negative sanctions, with which to coerce people to conform, and to punish people who fail to conform.



ACTIVITY

An individual in your locality has become addictive to alcohol.With the help of social control, how can you make that individual realize his mistake and lead a normal life?

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5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Socialisation helps in internalising the culture into the child.
- Socialization, includes learning of three important processes: cognitive affective, and evaluative.
- The agencies of socialisation are family, the school, friends or peer groups, religion, neighbourhood or neighbours and the state.
- Social control is a social mechanism that regulates individual and group behaviour.
- The means of social control can be categorised into formal means of social control and informal means of social control.
- Folkways and mores are some of the informal means of social control. Formal means of social controls are the laws, education, coercion, codes, etc.
- Socialisation is regarded as the effective means of social control as people learn the norms and values of their culture, as well as the proper conduct of behaviour in the society.
- Norms are an informal means of social control.
- Norms are usually based on some degree of consensus and are preserved through social sanctions.
- Folkways are simply the customary, normal habitual ways of a group. They have some degree of traditional sanction.
- Mores are a set of group belief that define the most fundamental ideas about what is considered right and wrong within human behavior.

- Mores provide the moral and ethical standards of behaviour for a group or a society.
- Folkways are less deeply rooted in society and change more rapidly than the mores which are more deeply rooted and change less frequently.



5.8 FURTHER READING

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2. Rao, C.N. Shankar (2003) Sociology, New Delhi
3. Jayaram N. (1987). Introductory Sociology. Macmillan India Limited.
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5.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

Ans to Q No. 1: The three important processes in socialization are cognitive, affective and evaluative

Ans to Q No 2: In order to exist and progress, social control is important for any society. Society has to exercise a certain control over its members since any marked deviation from the established ways is considered as a threat to its welfare.

Ans to Q No 3: If the social norms are ignored, then there is risk involved for the person of becoming unacceptable, unpopular or even an outcast from the group.

Ans to Q No 4: There are different societies which have different workable pattern of folkways. As in western societies, shaking hands is ideal for greeting person, while in India, to greet people one have to fold

hands together. Both the ways are workable and correct in two different contexts.



5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What do you mean by socialization? What are the agencies of socialization?

Q 2: What is social control? What are the means of control?

Q 3: What are social norms? Describe its importance in social life?

Q 4: What are folkways? What are the characteristics of folkways?

Q 5: Write the differences between folkways and mores.

Q 6: Describe briefly socialization as a measure of social control.

Q 7: Write briefly about the different types of norms in social life.