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UNIT 1 MEANING, DEFINITION AND STAGES OF SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

STRUCTURE

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- 1.2 Learning Objectives
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 - 1.3.1 Shared Meanings and Values
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Block, we have learnt about the concepts of social stratification. In this unit we shall discuss various aspects of socialization. It begins with the process and concept of socialization and discusses its aims and functions. Among the important aspects of this unit is a discussion on stages of socialization. This unit, thereby, provides an in-depth view of the nature of socialization.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the concept of Socialization
- discuss the Importance of Socialization in Society
- explain the different stages of Socialization.

1.3 SOCIALIZATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

By now, we know that for the maintenance of social life, it is important that people know about the rules and regulations. Living in a society, we see how other people behaving in various circumstances and hear from them as to how to behave in different circumstances. Also, when we behave we are told and reminded of how to behave. In this way, we are trained about the rules, regulations, and practices of the society. The rules, norms, values, practices etc. of the society become internalized in the members of the society. This process is called socialization. Socialization is, thus, a process whereby the individuals learn to conform to the norms of the group. It is a continuous process of social learning.

W.F. Ogburn defines socialization as “the process by which individual learns to conform to the norms of the group.”

Horton and Hunt state that, “Socialization is a process, whereby, one internalizes the norms of groups so that a distinct ‘self’ emerges, unique to this individual.”

Every individual is born and brought up in different situations and have their individual history. We, therefore, find that each individual has passed through different combinations of the socialization process even within the same society. In a family, we find that the siblings are different in certain ways in their social personality. They may have been to different schools and educational institutions, had different friends and met different people who influenced them in the formation of their social nature or personality. But, despite these individual differences, the members generally learn the basic common norms, values and practices which enable them to behave with each other in ways that make possible the functioning of the society. Socialization is a kind of learning that contributes to one’s ability to perform social roles. It is desirable and desired learning. It is a continuous process that begins with birth and ends with death. In this process, we acquire new roles and drop old ones.

1.3.1 Shared Meanings and Values

The socialization of the young means that they learn to appreciate the shared meanings and values of the culture at large or take them and that as guides to direct behaviour patterns in their own life. As the young child grows, he or she learns to utilize role-learning so as to internalize what to expect from other people and how to produce for them what is expected of children. A child learns to recognize and to respond to the shared meanings and expectations from others only through the process of socialization.

The process of socialization begins at birth. It is a continuous process because social learning never ends. However, childhood is the most important stage in the process of socialization during which a child internalizes or learns most of the values, beliefs, norms, attitudes and behaviour patterns of its family. The parents can be viewed as the socializing agents and the child as the socialized. "Parents are usually the most potent socializing force working on the individual in the early stages of childhood. Both consciously and unconsciously they push the

child in certain directions disposing him to learn in a particular way." (White, G. 1977:1) It is viewed by sociologists as a continuous and dynamic process that continues throughout life and demands re-socialization (discussed in 8-6) at different stages of one's life.

Thus, from the point of view of society, socialization trains a child to become a member of a society by transmitting its norms, values and beliefs. It also transforms the biological organism into a self, with a sense of identity, capable of disciplining and ordering behaviour endowed with ideals, values and ambitions. However, socialization regulates behaviour, it is also an indispensable condition for individuality and self-awareness (Broom and Selznick; 1955: 43).

Activity 1.1

Do you think a boy and a girl are socialized in the same way in your family/kin group? If not, then why? Write an essay on "Gender Difference and Socialization in My Family" in about 500 words. Share your ideas and essay with other students and Academic Counselor at your study center.

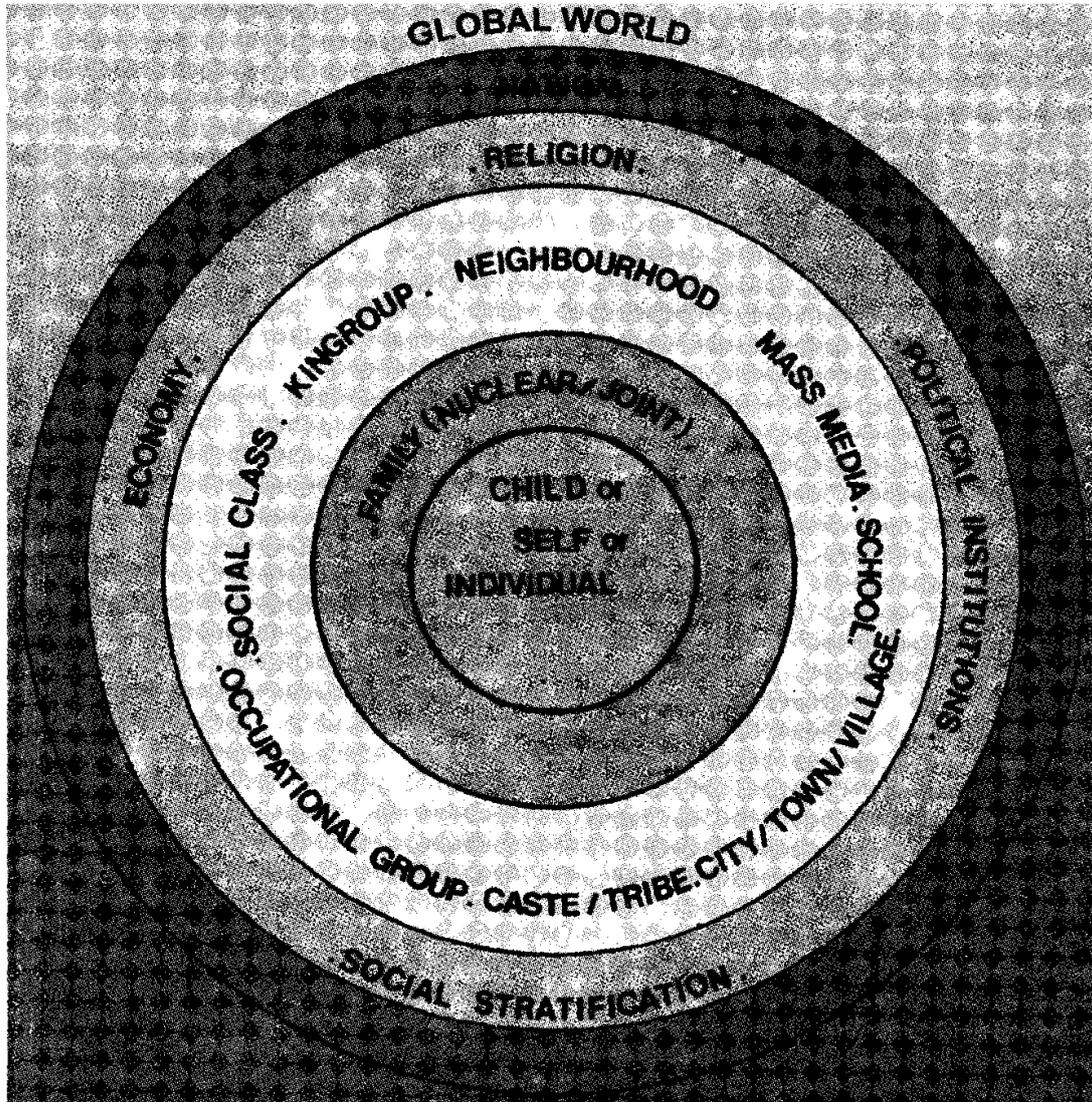
1.3.2 Education and Socialization

In some societies, especially-in tribal societies, the education and socialization of the young - takes place without extensive formal educational institutions. However, education as a process of learning is universal and takes place everywhere whether one lives in a city, village, and jungle or in a desert. The universality of learning however does not mean that all learning is socialization just as all education is not socialization.

We may also mention that all learning is not socialization since some of what one learns may not be relevant or necessary for participation in given social roles. One could give the example of, learning to smoke cigarette, cigar, etc. which may be irrelevant to that norms of participation in the given social roles among certain social groups. However, the process by which individuals acquire these values and norms (these are also referred to as culture) is in many ways similar in all societies. They may differ from society to society and according to certain factors within specific societies.

A child, in the first instance, is a member of a family. But he or she is also a member of a larger kin-group (Biradri, Khandan etc.) consisting of brothers, sisters and other relatives of the parents. The family into which he or she is born may be a nuclear family or an extended family (for the difference see Unit 5 of this course). It is also a member of a larger society. Membership of these groups and institutions imposes certain behavioural norms and values on each member. Thus, we are members of various groups simultaneously. For instance, we are a member of family, a biradri, a khandan, or a kunba, or a society, of a school or college all at the same time. Corresponding to these memberships there are roles that are performed, e.g., that of a son, daughter, grand child or a student. These are multiple roles which are

performed simultaneously. The process of learning the norms, attitudes, values or behavioural patterns of these groups begins early in life and continues throughout one's life.



Nature of Socialization

Check Your Progress Exercise 1.1

Note:

- I. Use the space below for your answer.
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.1 Explain in three lines what is meant by socialization.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SOCIALISATION

The main objective of Socialization is the development of self and the formation of personality. The concept of 'self' refers to the individual as subject (as the source of the action and self-reflection), whereas the term 'personality' refers to the individual as object (the object of external evaluation). Thus, Socialization is the process through which an individual is socialized and turned into an effective member of the society or a social being. The following are the main objectives of socialization:

- It inculcates basic disciplines ranging from toilet habits to the method of science.
- It helps an individual in developing the expertise and capacities needed to be a member of the society.
- It trains one social role (responsibilities) and their supporting attitudes.
- It aspires individuals and satisfies their needs.
- It helps in the transmission of culture from generation to generation.
- It develops a sense of identity and the capacity for independent thought and action, for example learning of language.
- It develops conscience, which is one important characteristic product of this process.

1.5 SOCIALISATION: NORMS AND VALUES

The norms and values may differ within a society in different families belonging to different castes, regions or social classes or religious groups according to whether one lives in a village or in a city or one belongs to a tribe and whether one is a boy or girl. These social groups can be viewed as socialising agencies. Their role confirms that the variation in norms and values takes place according to some of these affiliations mentioned above. For example, emphasis on cleanliness may vary according to social class. Also the language that one speaks depends on the region one belongs to. A child is not born knowing a particular language but learns it after birth. Again, some people do not eat meat altogether or abstain only from beef or pork according to the religious groups they belong to. Thus the same human infant is capable of growing into different kinds of adults. The adult personality formed in one society will be different from that of an adult in another society: he or she may be unfit for participation in many others. For example, a person who does not eat meat, smoke or drink alcohol may look odd in a family where all these are permitted. Is socialisation a one way process in which the child merely receives from the parents passively without being actively involved in it? There are different views on it. However, in this unit, our position is that it is a two-way process involving mutuality of interaction. True, the young child is not as active as the adult member, it is never a passive receiver.

What we have emphasised so far is that the aim of the socialisation process is to help the child learn to conform to the societal norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour patterns. Here when we refer to societal expectation, it means that there are various levels of expectation. When the individual is born, the first societal experience is through the family but as the child grows up in the modern contemporary societies, his/her experiences expand.

It becomes a member of a number of agencies. The school is the second agency of which children become members. Later on they will also become members of the religious groups to which their parents belong. They will also be members of the social classes to which their families belong. They will also become members of the occupational groups. The specific aim of socialisation is to help the child to internalise these norms and become an active member of the society.

A child is integrated into the society in the manner discussed above. Therefore, socialisation is the process of social control to strengthen group life and also to foster the development of the individual. It teaches or trains the individual to conform to the expectations of the social group or groups. Thus, conformity to the group norms and behaviour is basic to the process of socialisation through which society exerts social control on the individual members.

1.5.1 Transmission of Knowledge

According to Emile Durkheim, the categories of thought in the mind of individuals develop during the course of socialisation. Socialisation also transmits knowledge from one generation to the next. Social solidarity requires conformity to norms, rules and values as prescribed by the society. When groups assemble and reinforce the feelings of solidarity e.g., wedding, or religious festivals, mourning etc., these occasions help express the solidarity of the family and the kin group. On the other hand, the Republic Day and the Independence Day are occasions to express the solidarity of the nation. The social customs, rituals and social ceremonies and occasions which bring members of a group together are called socialisation practices. Through these practices, knowledge about norms values and behaviour pattern is transmitted among members of human social groups.

The individual, through socialisation, helps maintain the social order. Thus socialisation brings about social control by enabling the individual to know what to think and what not to think, what to do and what not to do. Here, apart from the sense of group solidarity, the individual has the fear of disapproval, punishment etc. which the society metes out for various acts of deviance from the normal course of conduct.

1.5.2 Conformity

While socialisation produces a degree of conformity to social norms behaviour in every society, yet some individuals may still not conform. In other words, socialisation may not be able to command complete conformity from all members of the society. Many factors may encourage conflict. There may be conflicts between the aims and functions of the socialising agents and of the socialised. We have already mentioned that an individual is socialised by many agencies - the family, the school, playmates, peer group, occupational group, and in the modern society, also by the written word (i.e. books, magazines) and by the mass media (television, radio, cinema). If they emphasise different values, the individual's conformity to the values of a group or groups will be reduced. For example, students may be encouraged to be exposed to mass-media. However, if mass-media teaches fundamentalism and extreme conservatism, the conformity of students to liberal values is likely to be reduced.

The cases of non-conformity are referred to as those of deviance from the norms of the group. The values of the children from the poor families will be at variance with those of the school. These children are referred to as deviants and in extreme cases as juvenile delinquents.

1.6 STAGES OF SOCIALISATION PROCESS

Socialisation is a lifelong process and is not confined to childhood alone. It begins at childhood and continues throughout life. At every phase of life, an individual is subjected to different transitions and face various crises which he/she has to overcome. Some earlier scholars like S. Freud and Jean Piaget have analysed and talked about the development process only up to childhood or adolescence. Freud has discussed a series of five stages of development of a child. These are *oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital*. Again, Piaget's classifications of the stages of cognitive development are sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), pre-operational stage (2 to 7 years), concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years) and formal operation stage (11 to 15 years). According to Piaget, the first three stages of development are universal but not all adults reach the three stages of operational stage. Following Freud, renowned sociologist, Talcott Parsons has also discussed about four stages- from the period of infancy (oral, anal and latency) to adolescence period. As said above, the process of socialisation does not stop at adolescence or at a certain age, but it continues till death.

According to Sociologists, different stages of human development are not biologically determined, even though it may appear to be so. Sociologists study the social construction of age. For them, age is a social category. Thus, they examine or analyse age and age-stages not as biological or chronological categories but as social categories. The studies of feral and isolated children are a testimony to the fact that that children do not develop from stage to stage (as contended by development theorists Freud and Piaget) at all if they do not interact. Interaction is a must for the development of a child. A child develops a consciousness of himself as being different from others through the association with other human beings. Hence, we can say that interactions help in making a child social. But biology is also important and cannot be completely ruled out. The stages of human 'life course' are social as well as biological. They are influenced by culture and also material environment of people in which they live. Man's biological nature makes socialisation both possible and necessary. Socialisation cannot occur if man did not have the inborn capacity to learn and use language.

Earlier, psychological (psychoanalytic) view of socialisation stressed that internal stimuli, drives instincts (innate development process), while the sociological view focused on the way an individual learns to fulfil the requirements of the various social roles he/she is called upon to play. A person becomes human by internalising the norms and expectations about behaviour of the people with whom he interacts. Sociologists have placed the main emphasis on the childhood and adolescence years rather than infancy period. In modern societies, the expectations at different stages of socialisation are changing for both men and women.

Erik Erikson (*Childhood and Society*, 1963) has attempted to integrate biological, psychological and sociological perspectives about 'conception of the life cycle'. He charts eight stages of psycho-social development of the individual as under:

Sl. No.	Stages	Psycho-Social Crises	Significant Social Relations
1.	First year of life	Trust v/s mistrust	Mother or mother substitute
2.	Second year	Autonomy v/s doubt	Parents
3.	Third through fifth years	Initiative v/s guilt	Basic family
4.	Sixth year to puberty	Industry v/s inferiority	Neighbourhood, school
5.	Adolescence	Identity v/s confusion	Peer groups and out-groups: models of leadership
6.	Early adulthood	Intimacy v/s isolation	Partners in friendship; sex competition, co-operation
7.	Middle adulthood	Generativity v/s self-absorption	Divided labour and shared household
8.	The ageing years	Integrity v/s despair	'Mankind', 'my kind'

Now, we shall describe briefly four important stages of socialisation from infancy to old age.

- ***Infancy and childhood (oral, anal and latency)***

This stage of life starts from birth to the beginning of adolescence, i.e., a period from 0 to 13-14 years of age. Earlier, 'childhood' as a separate phase of development did not exist, especially in traditional and preliterate societies. The young child moved directly from a lengthy infancy into working roles within the community. However, in modern societies, long period of childhood has been recognised. Both parenting and childhood have become clearly distinct from other stages that were true of traditional societies.

The child in his first year communicates with the outside world, including his/her mother is through the mouth and lips. The mother is the first socialising agent of the child. It is the mother who begins the process of socialisation. It is from her that the earliest social stimuli to

which a child is subjected come. He/She responds to these stimuli by imitating them. At this stage, the child makes no distinction between persons and things-the mother's breast and the nipple of the bottle are equally and solely the means of organic satisfaction. His/Her social activities are merely confined to Crying, smiling and eye movement in response to others. The roles of the mother and the infant are merged at this stage of development.

In the second year, toilet and other training are initiated in many societies. During this phase, the child learns how to eat his/her food; talk and behave appropriately. The child begins to develop a sense of control over himself/herself and his/her environment, although he/she is still dependent on his/her parents. He starts recognising the family relations. During this stage, the child internalises two roles-his/her own and that of his/her mother-now clearly separate.

Rapid physical development takes place from the 3rd to the 5th (phallic stage) year of life. During this period, the child becomes aware of genital sensations and in most cases, develops a sense of Freudian *Oedipus* complex, in which the boy's attachment to the mother is combined with jealous hostility towards father. At this stage, the child learns to 'behave himself/herself' in various contexts of his/her activity, particularly when interacting with adults. Besides, child also internalises all the four roles of the family, viz., husband-father, wife-mother, son-brother and daughter-sister.

Following this stage is the stage of latency, which continues from about 5 years to 12-13 years. By about five, the child no longer remains a dependent baby and becomes independent in the elementary routines of life at home. During this period, the child acquires informal aspects of culture-folkways, customs, fads and crazes, along with secret modes of gratification and forbidden knowledge. Sociologists have termed this stage as the 'gang stage'. During this stage, the child's social world broadens or expands. He develops relationship outside his/her family. Friend's seem to be more important in this stage as the child begins to take more interest in friends rather than family. In this stage, growth of social consciousness takes place and group activities and group loyalty becomes highly important. He/She gradually begins to revolt against adult domination.

- **Adolescence**

The period of adolescence begins with the attainment of Puberty. Puberty leads to several biological changes and it is universal (the point at which a person becomes capable of adult sexual activity and reproduction). This stage, which begins around 14-15 years of a person and continues till he/she attains 20-21 years, is an important stage of socialisation, It is a transition stage from childhood to maturity during which new patterns of behaviour are developed to meet the demands of both the larger and more diversified life of his peers of the adult society. In this stage, the attraction towards the opposite sex develops. Further Movies, Sports, T.V etc captivates his/her attention and interest more than anything else. Psychologist G. Stanly Hall wrote that 'adolescence' is 'naturally' a period of psychological 'storm and stress'. But, sociologists believe that the emotional experience of youth varies greatly between individuals and across cultures.

- **Adulthood**

“A person is considered to be adult or have attained adulthood when he/she can support himself or herself entirely independent of the paternal family..... Full adulthood implies the ability to form a family of one’s own life”(Johnson, 1960). During Adulthood, a person has to go through lot of stress and strain. Further, major decisions of life such as the choice of marriage partners, the choice of occupation, etc. has to be taken at this stage, and therefore, this stage becomes very crucial. Since, an individual starts working for his/her livelihood, gets married in this stage, he/she has to occupy number of positions and therefore he/she is accorded different statuses and entrusted with number of roles. Once an individual gets married, he/she has to face a new series of accommodations in his/her personal conduct. He/She learn and develop new habits, ideals, customs and notions to adjust with the spouse and his/her family. Again when they become parents or when they give birth to their child, they are faced with new situations and the necessities of new adjustments emerge. Further, both the parents will have different child rearing practices as they were brought up by different sets of parents, and hence they will have to adjust and socialise each other to reach agreement about childcare practices. All of this learning is a part of adult socialisation.

Another type of socialisation is occupational training, which teaches the attitudes and values associated with an occupation as well as skills. A doctor has to acquire technical knowledge required to practice medicine. A new employee in an office has to learn how to conform to the expectations of the other workers and to the written and unwritten rules. One has to learn the styles of dress, decor and people’s conduct in the company of fellow employees.

Adulthood can be divided into two stages –young adulthood and mature adulthood. Young adulthood is increasingly becoming a specific and important stage in the process of human development. This is a period of excitement and sexual development. In modern societies, young adults in their twenties engage themselves in preparing for their professional education, seeking career and finding some job or occupation. Besides this, they explore the possibilities of their life.

The mature adults (middle aged at about the age of 40) often experience a stress of self-evaluation during this period. At this stage, people realise that they have not achieved basic goals and ambitions and have little time left to do so. It is seen that women experience fear and confusion in their middle years. During this period, adults require the deep internalisation of norms and attitudes that run counter to norms already learned and assimilated.

- **Old Age**

Old age is considered to be the final stage or the final period of transition, which starts mostly between 60-65 years. Since, the concept of Old or old age varies from culture to culture, there is no universally accepted definition of old age. After attaining old age, people start preparing for retirement and restrict their occupational responsibilities. (Norms of retirement differ from place to place). As an individual grows old, his/her body gradually stops supporting and refuses to take stress. However, it varies from individual to individual. Some individual may

lead an active and pleasant life even at old age and in their case socialization continues till the end of life.

In traditional societies like India, older people are normally accorded a great deal of respect. The elders used to have a major, often the final, say in the matters of family and in the community as a whole. They had a great role in socializing the younger children in the family. Individuals used to feel themselves to be a part of a family and a community. But, now, things are swiftly changing. Older people do not receive that much respect, which they used to. They are even despised and are left alone to live at their own rejected from the economic arena, and no longer living with their children, it is not easy for older people to make the final period of their life rewarding. At the same time, it is no longer widely accepted that older people should simply sit around passively, waiting to die. Instead, there has been an increase in programmes to socialise the elderly for meaningful pursuits and continue happy living.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1.2

Note:

- I. Use the space below for your answer
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.2 Fill in the blanks given in the following sentences:

- i) The aim of the socialization process is to help the child to learn to conform to the societaland.....
- ii) Socialization may not be able to command complete from all members of the society.
- iii) Socialization process within the family is as well as
- iv) The aim of socialization process within the secondary groups such as schools are more and as compared with that of the family.

1.7 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALIZATION IN SOCIETY

- Socialization trains the individuals regarding the social roles that they need to play and also to choose from the various roles that they can play. In this way, it inducts the individual into the social world.
- It leads to growth of the personality and the self. The individual learns to place oneself in relation to others in society.
- The internalization of social norms enables one to perform roles accordingly and in this process, socialization helps social control, and maintains social order.
- Conformity to norms gives group identification and a sense of solidarity.
- In the process of socialization the individual also socializes others.
- It provides enough opportunities to display individual peculiarities.

- It is a process, which results in transmission of social heritage, eventually helps in the perpetuation and continuity of the society.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

- Socialization and social control shape and control social behaviour of its members.
- Socialization is a process whereby the individuals learn to conform to the norms of the group.
- It is a continuous process of social learning.
- Each individual passes through different combinations of the socialization process even within the same society.
- Socialization is a kind of learning that contributes to one's ability to perform social roles. It is desirable and desired learning. It is a continuous process that begins with birth and ends with death. In this process, we acquire new roles and drop old ones.
- It leads to the growth of personality and the self. The individual learns to place oneself in relation to others in society.
- It is a process, which results in transmission of social heritage and, thus helps in the perpetuation and continuity of the society.

1.9 GLOSSARY

Conformity:	To absorb certain social rules and regulations in behaviour, e.g., being appropriately dressed in social gatherings.
Internalisation:	To absorb something within the mind so deeply that it becomes part of one's behaviour, e.g., to internalize good manners
Socialized:	A person who is being socialized into the ways of society

1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q1:	Socialization is a learning process whereby one imbibes social values and behaviour patterns.
Answer to Q2:	(i) norms, values, belief, attitudes, behaviour pattern (ii) Conformity (iii) Conscious, unconscious (iv) deliberate explicit conscious

1.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Define norms and values in socialization.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Define Socialization. Discuss its importance in Society.

Q.2: Discuss the stages of Socialization

Q.3: “Socialization is a lifelong process”. Discuss

1.12 REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 AGENCIES OF SOCIALIZATION

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Objectives
- 2.3 Agencies of Socialization
 - 2.3.1 Growing Up
 - 2.3.2 Religion and Socialization
- 2.4 Differences in Socialization
 - 2.4.1 The Caste Factor
 - 2.4.2 Socialization in Tribes
 - 2.4.3 Other Institutions: The Ghotul
- 2.5 Families, Social Class and Socialisation
 - 2.5.1 Behavior and Family
 - 2.5.2 Socialization and Communication
 - 2.5.3 School and Socialization
- 2.6 Sex and Gender Identity
 - 2.6.1 Gender Related Studies
 - 2.6.2 Sexual Discrimination
- 2.7 Mass Media and Socialisation
 - 2.7.1 Messages in Mass Media
 - 2.7.2 Impact of Television
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.9 Glossary
- 2.10 Check Your Progress: Answer Keys
- 2.11 References

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the various agencies of socialisation. These include the family, religious organisation, mass media, etc. It also discusses differences in socialisation of boys and girls. The significance of caste and tribal culture in the process of socialisation in the Indian context is also discussed. The effect of social class on socialisation and sexual discrimination in the socialisation process are also examined in detail.

2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe different factors in and agencies of socialization;
- state the differences in socialization process with the illustrations of some societies;
- assess the impact of family, class, caste and mass media on socialization; and
- explain the ways in which socialization process takes care of gender identity formation.

2.3 AGENCIES OF SOCIALISATION

The child is socialized by several agencies and institutions in which he or she participates, viz. his or her family, school, peer group, the neighbourhood, and the occupational group and by the social class. The position of the family in the social structure is determined by the social class, caste, religion, etc., and by the fact that the family lives in the rural or in the urban areas. We shall also mention some of the other factors which are important. For example, there is variation in the socialisation process, according to whether one is rich or poor, whether one is tribal or non-tribal, whether one is a boy or a girl or whether one is a child or an adult. The differentiation in socialisation may also be reflected through music, rituals, language, art and literature, which form part of one's culture consisting of complex set of variables.

These are the factors and agencies which introduce differentiation in the socialisation process within different societies. These are very crucial and should be taken into account to dispel the impression that socialisation is uniform across all societies or within a particular society. We shall first discuss some of the factors responsible for the variation in the socialisation process namely age, religion, caste, region, etc. In the next section, we discuss the different agencies of socialisation (namely, family, school etc.) which also prevent uniformity. In the last section, we outline the role of gender and the mass media (especially television) since these cut across all boundaries.

2.3.1 Growing Up

The socialisation process in infancy and childhood is different from that during adulthood. Some social scientists divide socialisation into stages of the life of an individual. Some have referred to various Hindu rites or samskaras as being equivalent to different stages. In addition, there are the ashrams, which divide the life of an individual into stages.

There are various traditional Hindu rites or samskaras which divide childhood into several stages. These are namakarana, nishakarmana, annaprasana, chudakarana or tonsure, vidyarambha and upanayana. Moreover, traditionally the division of an individual's life into four stages, namely, brahmacharya, grihasthashrama, vanaprastha and sanyasa are a direct reflection of the socialisation of a Hindu male.

The agencies of socialisation change as the individual matures. For example, school and the peer group compete with the family for access to the individual through childhood and adolescence. The occupational group and the newly established family after marriage become more important during adulthood.

2.3.2 Religion and Socialization

Difference in the socialisation processes and practices is noticeable among certain religious communities. As for example, the rites and ceremonies, customs, dress, sometimes language and beliefs, attitudes and values and the behaviour patterns of Christians, Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims are different. These may be at variance with one another although some of the external symbols such as dress, speech, and deportment have become uniform for all religious groups in the big cities during the last few years, so that it has become difficult to distinguish members of one religious community from another on the basis of dress, etc. In the villages, a significant section of people are continuing to wear their traditional dresses and can still be distinguished on the basis of these outward symbols. In addition, and more importantly, the emphasis on what constitutes a good Hindu or a good Muslim or a good Sikh or a good Christian, also creates differences in the values and behaviour of members of a larger society. For instance, a good Muslim must perform prayers five times a day, a Christian must attend church on Sundays, a Sikh should do service at a Gurdwara and a Hindu must give charity in the temples. Similarly, further subdivisions can be drawn on the basis of Shaivite and Vaishnavite Brahmins of southern India. So also the marriage ceremony and rites differ among those who follow the Arya Samaj and Sanatana Dharma, the two Hindu sects in the Punjab. Thus, the differences are not confined to religious ideology but are reflected in the socialisation process through the beliefs, attitudes, norms and behaviour patterns of the people belonging to these sects and subjects.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.1

Note:

- I. Use the space below for your answer
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.1 Write a brief note on the major agencies that socialize a person. Use about five lines.

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.....

Q.2 Select the correct matching

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| A) Childhood | 1. Family |
| B) Adolescence | 2. Professional Group |
| C) Adulthood | 3. Peer-Group |

2.4 DIFFERENCES IN SOCIALIZATION

A city-bred person who comes across a person from the village is likely to notice him or her because of the differences in their dress, speech and their deportment. The villager is recognizable not only by the outward symbols mentioned but also by his or her values norms and behavior patterns he/she upholds and considers appropriate. On the other hand, a person living in a village will be struck by the difference in dress, speech and deportment of those who belong to the city. You may have often heard that a person hailing from a village or a small town feels that people in the city are too involved in their own affairs to be bothered about their guests or the elders in the family. These differential responses are the outcome of differential socialisation processes in the rural and urban areas.

Box 2.1

An Indian villager generally believes that a “guest” is to be honoured in the same manner as God himself and whatever his/her capacity may be will not neglect a guest. But a city person, especially in the metropolis, may not welcome a guest who has no prior appointment. Reason for visit becomes an essential criterion.

It is not that a city person does not desire or know how to honour a guest but other life style factors, such as, living space, expensive everyday expenditure, children's education often forces people to curtail excessive entertainment of guests. Thus, circumstances change the values which ideally are believed by most Indians.

2.4.1 The Caste Factor

If you are living in a village or in a small town, you may be aware of the behaviour that is expected of you as a member of a small town. Thus, there are certain value norms and behaviour patterns that are common to most villages. Certain rituals and ceremonies may also be common to all the members of a village. However, a village community is also divided into small groups called castes. The castes are divided on the basis of birth because people are born into them. You may be at least able to distinguish a Brahmin from a Harijan or you may even be able to distinguish a blacksmith from a goldsmith or from a washer man. Therefore, within a village, there are likely to be subcultures while the culture of a village itself may have something in common which is shared by all its members and bind all the members together. The language or the dialect also tends to vary. The upper castes speak more refined and sophisticated form of the language than spoken by the lower castes. Similarly, there are differences in the dress that is considered appropriate or inappropriate for a particular caste. Again, the behaviour that is considered proper by one caste may not be so considered by the other. For example, vegetarianism may not be so considered by the other. For example, vegetarianism may be more popular among the Brahmins than among other castes.

2.4.2 Socialization in Tribes

The socialisation process differs according to whether it occurs in a tribe or non-tribe. We shall give extracts on the socialisation process in a tribe called Muria which inhabits the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh in central India. However, this should not give the impression that the Muria represent the whole tribal culture. There are several tribes in India about which you have read in Units 5 and 6. There are tremendous variations in the socialisation process among them as are in the non-tribal world. Therefore, this example of socialisation process among the Murias is only one such example. You may be able to think of several others. If you meet people from different parts of India or have such friends, you may notice the differences.

2.4.3 Other Institutions: The Ghotuls

Similar institutions are found among communities of Austro-Asiatic cultures. But Bastar ghotul is highly developed and the most organized in the world. One could think of communes in contemporary society, as for example, the Kibbutz in Israel where an effort was made to bring up children on community-basis by taking them away from their families. Similar institutions are found among other tribals in India, as for example, the village guardroom among the Nagas and the boys' club among the Oraon. Ghotul for the Murias is the centre of social and religious life. It also assigns educational tasks among children. All unmarried Muria boys and girls from the age of five or six years are members of ghotul. They sleep at night in the ghotul and are directly responsible for its care and maintenance. During the day, they go to their parents' home and help them in various tasks. They leave the ghotul after marriage.

The membership of ghotul is carefully organized. After a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries graded rank and social duty. Leaders are appointed to organize and discipline the society. The boys' leader is Sirdar and the girl's Belosa. Boy members are known as Chelik and girl members as Motiari. The relations between Chelik and Motiari are governed by the customary rules and regulation of ghotul to which they belong. Indeed, ghotul teaches discipline and introduces the feeling of fraternity and friendship among its members.

2.5 FAMILIES, SOCIAL CLASS AND SOCIALISATION

These two dimensions are being taken together because 'family' here includes not only the size, the composition and the type but the social position. The social position of a family is determined by caste, race and social class, etc. However, it is the last dimension name by social class which have received attention of sociologists in the West while race too has been given some importance. Not many studies on socialisation with reference to family or caste or any other dimension or agency have been undertaken in India. Therefore, we shall depend on our own observations to illustrate the relationship between family and socialisation. We shall also take examples from other countries to substantiate the relationship between social class, family and socialisation in the context of school.

It has already been mentioned in the sub section 3.3 that a key agency of socialisation in all human societies is the family which transforms the young infant into a member of a human community. It is the first prolonged and intimate interaction system the individual encounters after birth.

However, the things that members of a given family wish to teach or transmit to the child are limited by that family's unique historical and societal experience. As a result of this, we observe familial differences in child-rearing practices as well as attitudinal and behavioural outcomes regarding social relationships and skills. Each child is more or less uniquely prepared for the cultural reality that his or her family has experienced or wishes to experience.

2.5.1 Behaviour and Family

Family inculcates attitudes relating to proper behaviour, decision-making and obedience to authority, etc. In addition, children learn the attitudes and skills necessary to play a role in the production and consumption of goods and services. Each family adopts division of labour regarding family tasks and prepares its young for the notion of work. Thus, early socialisation into economic roles also takes place within the family.

As contact with others grows, other alternatives become available to the child. He or she is introduced to the new social institutions or agencies such as the school and the peer group in the neighbourhood. The influence of parents is reduced because new reference groups such as peer group become more important. Thus, a number of secondary group relations and pressures must be coped with by the child alongside the group relations learnt initially in the family.

A number of studies have been undertaken on the effect of family background on the educational performance of the child, which is pertinent to socialisation. One of the salient findings of these studies is the negative impact of a school on a child if he or she belongs to a working class home with little emphasis on cognitive achievement. This is because the school emphasizes good results and a behaviour pattern which is alien to the child's family. Moreover, researchers have also pointed out those middle-class parents more than working-class parents are likely to put emphasis on the need for success in studies to reinforce the socialising function of the school and stress, in general, achievement-oriented values. Again, a relationship is seen between the occupational role of the father and the difference in the socialisation-orientations of the children. For instance, since a working-class father has less autonomy and satisfaction in the work situation, he tends to be authoritarian and severe towards his family members, especially his son.

Activity 2.1

From your own experience, find out whether your socialization was done in an authoritarian atmosphere or liberal atmosphere i.e. whether your parents were very strict disciplinarians, allowing you no opinion of your own or were ready to listen to you and guide you on the

right path with persuasion rather than tyranny. Write one page essay on "I and my Parents" on this issue. Discuss it with other students at your study centre.

2.5.2 Socialization and Communication

The importance of language and difference in the pattern of communication between parents and children according to social class are the other dimensions which have been studied by sociologists, notable among them being Basil Bernstein. According to him, patterns of language-use and the teaching styles are class-based. He saw a relationship between social structure, forms of speech and the subsequent regulation of behaviour in the schools. For instance, he argued that children from different social classes respond differently to educational opportunities and an important determinant of their response to the school's cognitive aims and teacher's style etc., is the language or linguistic code of the child. He also argued that different social structures produce different types of speech systems. As the child learns his speech, he learns the requirements of his social structure, which vary according to social class. Therefore, the language of the working-class child is limited in vocabulary while that of the middle-class child does not suffer from this limitation. The teacher is, by and large, from the middle class and can communicate better with the middle-class child since they share the same linguistic code or language with its vocabulary, meanings, syntax etc. Thus, the working class child cannot communicate as well with the teacher and begins with a handicap which affects him or her throughout his/her school career because of this restricted co-operation.

The same factors can be observed in schools in India, where most teachers came from upper caste/class backgrounds in schools and students who belonged to scheduled caste or tribes could not some time even understand the language of the teacher, let alone feel at par with other upper caste/class students.

Several studies have been undertaken linking different dimensions of schooling with the family of the child. We have only given some examples to demonstrate the importance of family and social class in socialisation at home and outside the home, particularly in the school. However, we may also mention that these studies merely indicate a direction and are not conclusive.

2.5.3 School and Socialization

‘School’ is used here to refer to a whole range of formal educational institutions which are the characteristics of the contemporary industrial and industrializing, urban complex-societies. We shall only mention here that schools provide two contexts for the students. The first is the formal context of the classroom wherein the content of socialisation is determined by the text books and the cognitive aims of the process of teaching. The second context is informal and can be perceived in the inter-personal relations of students with teachers and those among students (peer group).

Social control comes to be exercised by the school and the increased professionalization of teaching helps to undermine the authority base of the family as a socialising agency. Again, the content of socialisation as well as the knowledge to be transmitted become the focus of the curriculum and syllabi and a set of carefully prescribed practices. What parents did or do by instinct and with love, professionals must do with clear regulations and justifications.

The socialisation process within the school may or may not supplement and reinforce the process within the family. In fact, it may be in conflict with the socialising values, norms and behaviour patterns of the family.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.2

Note:

- I. Use the space below for your answer
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.3 Discuss briefly how socialization occurs in tribes. Use about five lines.

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Q.4 Write a comment on the role of school on the socialization process. Use about five lines.

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2.6 SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY

Every society has a systematic way to deal with sex or gender roles. In other words every culture has a process by which it prepares the children to play the roles that society expects and requires of them as adults and these roles vary according to sex, ethnicity and social class etc. Of course, sex is almost universally the most basic category and refers to biological differences (i.e. differences in their bodies) between men and women while gender refers to the social differences assigned to sex. In other words, it refers to the division between masculine and feminine roles, tasks, attributes, etc. For example, the division of sexual labour refers to the fact that women bear children and men do not. This division is based on biological differences. The sexual division of labour or gender-based division, on the other hand, refers to different tasks, such as agricultural work being masculine and household work as feminine. This division also includes traits such as aggressiveness being masculine and

submissiveness being feminine. Of course, the sexual division may vary among societies and social groups.

The success of socialisation process is indicated by the studies which show that gender identity is the unchanging core of the personality formation and is firmly established in the early stages of one's life. However, although biological differences between men and women are universal, there is differentiation of roles by gender, across cultures and societies. This is, because when biological differences are projected into the social sphere they give rise to masculine and feminine roles although they are not innate. Anthropologists have given examples from different cultures to demonstrate variation in sex roles from one culture and society to another. For example, in the hunting societies while the male folk took active role in the hunting in making tools and weapons, females are mostly passive. Their females took active roles in the reproductive activities. On the other hand, in the agricultural society in Africa women play considerably active role in the productive activities. In spite of the stereotype of gender roles which exist in all societies, in reality women may be participating equally in the so-called masculine work, such as, agriculture, unskilled work in factories etc. In the same manner, men quite often assist women folk in domestic work, especially amongst the nuclear families in urban areas where both husband and wife work.

2.6.1 Gender Related Studies

Systematic interest by social scientists in gender-related studies has been very recent. The most widely researched field is the socialisation process which differentiates between men and women in almost all societies, and produces what are called masculine and feminine roles, images, behaviour patterns and tasks. In other words, it helps in producing stereotypes of male and female. For example, in several societies women are considered submissive, passive and dependent as if these were inborn traits whereas the masculine traits are active, aggressive and independent. Again, the division of labour is along gender. For example, housekeeping tasks are assigned to women and most of the external, public and production-related tasks are given to men. (Yet there may be differences among different tribes, see for example, Muria.)

You may have observed that girls have to be obedient, submissive (not only to parents but also to their brothers in most Indian families) not outgoing or to take initiative. They are given elaborate instructions on what dress to wear and on what occasion. There is emphasis on modesty. They are not expected to laugh loudly although the situation may be changing in metropolitan cities. However, the situation goes back to square one at the time of a girl's marriage even in the most enlightened families. In many families they are discouraged to take subjects at school which involve hard work (science and mathematics) or which are likely to lead to a career (for example, medicine or engineering). It may be so even in families where sons are not doing as well in studies as are the daughters. Even then the sons will be encouraged to take up courses like science and other professional courses. When parents can afford to spend only on the education of one child (even in Delhi or Chennai etc.) the chances are higher that the son will be sent for higher education instead of the daughter.

2.6.2 Sexual Discrimination

This is discrimination based on the social expectation that a girl from the upper and middle class will not be working even though a large number of them are working in the metropolitan cities these days. Also, that they will get married and become full-time housewives and leave their families.

Since parents, grand-parents, friends, teachers etc. are agents of socialisation, the situation is further complicated because it takes place within the home and is very personal. Again, it takes place through people who are also emotionally involved in the process. It is further complicated by the fact that boys and girls like to approximate their behaviour to that expected by parents since it is likely to make the latter happy. They would also not like to offend those whom they love i.e., the significant others’.

The discussion of socialisation and sex roles is linked to that of stereotypes and discrimination. When social roles are assigned on the basis of gender, which results in discrimination or puts unreasonable limitations on women, then it needs to be questioned. The other words, used in this context are bias, sexism, and stereotyping. Although, each has separate meanings, these terms underline the discriminatory treatment given to and inferior position assigned to women in society. For example, (a) men are considered superior to women and (b) women are denied access to positions of power. Some well-known examples of discrimination are: paying women less than men for the same jobs and denying them educational opportunities and certain jobs because of their sex. It may be illustrated with the fact that in agriculture women laborers are paid less than their male counterparts. Again boys may be encouraged to go in for higher education because they will bring higher income to the family. But this may not be the case for girls in a majority of the families. Such discrimination is rooted in stereotyping (mental picture held in common by members of a group). It represents an over simplified opinion and judgment about the members of a group, be they women, Hindus or Negroes.

Therefore, when we said earlier that society socializes the new born infant or that it socializes the child into becoming fit member of the society, we referred to certain traits which are expected of all members of society regardless of whether they are boys or girls. Hindus or Muslims, villagers or urbanites, tribals or non-tribals. The task of socialisation is undertaken by various agencies; however, we have focused on the family since it is the primary agency of socialisation.

2.7 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIALIZATION

In contemporary societies, the means of mass communication such as the books radio, newspapers, films or cinema, records, and video are very potent sources of socialising those who are either their readers or the listeners or the viewers. These mass media, especially the films, the radio and the television simultaneously communicate the same message to a nationwide audience cutting across all boundaries. Therefore, its impact on socialisation is crucial.

Here we are concerned basically with the message that is conveyed, the images that are projected because they form the content of the socialisation process through the mass media and the impact of the message and the images. Thus, for example, the specific questions in the context of gender and socialisation will be: What are the images of men and women portrayed on the mass media especially on the television? In the context of the rural population we may ask: What are the images of the rural folk and is the message relevant for the villagers? Is their image really representative of their experience and if that is so, which part of village India does it represent? Or, what is the impact of violence in films on the children? Similar questions can be asked with reference to all the dimensions that cut across Indian society.

Activity 2.2

Observe at least 5 children between the age group five to ten years in your neighborhood for at least two days. Write a report of about one page on “Impact of Mass Media (esp. TV) on Children’s Behaviour” in your society. Compare your answer with your peers at your study center.

Another question which is of general relevance would be: Which is/are the most important medium media and for whom? For example, while television in India has become the most important medium for almost everyone in India, comics are important for the children in the metropolitan cities while the video and now Cable T.V., Computer CD’s and Internet communication has become a rage among the elite families even in the rural areas.

2.7.1 Messages in Mass Media

However, the crucial question in the context of socialisation is related to the message as well as the image. Scientific studies on media-use and media-impact are few and far between in our country. Very recently, the images of women in the text books and the comics as well as in the films and television and their impact on children have attracted the attention of scholars, and social activists. For instance, most school text-books portray women as being housewives and men as bread earners. Experts are arguing that this is not true in so far as the lower income strata are concerned since women in these strata always worked to earn money to meet the basic necessities of life. Moreover, even the middle class women in big cities are now-a-days working in order to meet the high cost of living as well as the rising social expectations arising out of higher education. Thus, the portrayal of women's images should reflect this reality.

Most studies on media conducted in other countries have either focused on television or have concluded that television is the predominant medium used by children although other important media exist (e.g., comics, books, films etc.). Watching television has become a central leisure time activity all over the world and remains a major source of leisure time gratification. We shall discuss television as only one example of socialisation through the mass media. While some of the points raised here will be applicable to other media as well, certain others may not be relevant.

2.7.2 Impact of Television

Television contacts the viewer directly through its message and does not involve social and interpersonal interaction. Moreover, it is embedded in another agency, namely, the family since it is generally viewed at home. It can propagate values in contradiction to those rooted in a specific social context. Its message may also get distorted because a large proportion of our population is illiterate and lives in the rural areas while the programmes are oriented to the urban viewer. Thus, the values and behaviour patterns transmitted through it may be in conflict with those upheld by the parents. Parents react to this in several ways such as rigorous control of viewing (especially on Sundays or during the examination) and not permitting the watching of certain programmes (e.g., late night adult movies). However, the child's peers or friends at school or in the neighborhood will influence him or her by discussing specific programmes. Teachers may also comment on them. In addition, parents have no direct control over the content of programmes.

What are the dominant concerns of the studies conducted in other countries? Most focus on children as the audience and the effects of television on children. The most widespread view of socialisation through the mass media is that it contains harmful experiences, particularly for children, but also for families in general. Some refer to the hypothesized tendency of television (and even cinema) to incite young people to crime and violence. Although these studies are only speculative, they are pointers to further research.

So far, the impression you may get is that the impact of television is only unidirectional or one way. While it is true that its impact is direct, it is not devoid of the social context. Viewing is a social activity insofar as it is done within the home and in the presence of family members. Viewers comment on programmes favorably or unfavorably. The interpersonal elements of other viewers are important as much as are the timing and the physical environment. Therefore, television is one element in an interlocking system. It does not exist in a vacuum and its effects are mediated and modified by the social context of viewing. In other words, the reaction to the programme is determined to some extent, by the fact that you are watching it along with your parents or not, and whether you are watching it at home or outside, and so on.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.3

Note:

- I. Use the space below for your answer
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.5 Write a description of how gender-based or sexual discrimination occurs in the socialization process. Use about five lines.

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Q.6 Comment on the effect of mass media on the process of socialization. Use about five lines.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit that socialisation has many agencies. It works through these agencies and disseminates different types of behaviour modes. Some of these agencies are the family, caste group, tribe, school, etc. In fact we have emphasized that even gender differences (between boys and girls, men and women) are largely learned processes. Very often the mass media such as cinema and television reinforce ideas and stereotypes of social behaviour. But sometimes they do not. This unit has also examined the impact of mass media on the process of socialisation.

2.9 GLOSSARY

- Agencies:** The means whereby the process of socialisation (in our case) is facilitated, e.g. family and school.
- Dialect:** This is the subordinate form of a language peculiar to a region or a social group with non-standard vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Gender:** There are two sexes, male and female. It is the social dimension of the differences in the work roles, behaviour and traits of men and women.
- Ghotul:** Bachelor's hall of both men and women of the Murias of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh.
- Linguistic Code:** Language including vocabulary, speech patterns etc. used and understood by members of a given social group while communication through them may be difficult across social groups.

2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Ans to Q.1 The major agencies that socialize a person are the family, school, peer group, the neighborhood etc. The examples of factors that influence socialization are (i) membership to a social class or caste, and (ii) whether one is a boy or a girl.

Ans to Q.2 A) Childhood 1. Family
 B) Adolescence 3. Peer-Group
 C) Adulthood 2. Professional Group

Ans to Q.3 Socialization occurs in tribes through special institutions like the Ghotuls among Murias, village guardroom amongst Nagas etc. In these institutions all unmarried boys and girls from the age of five or six live together. They are assigned educational tasks and are held responsible for its maintenance. During daytime they go to their parents' home and help them in various tasks but at night they sleep in the Ghotul. After marriage they leave the Ghotul.

Ans to Q.4 The two contexts of socialization that school provide are formal context and informal context. Formal context is determined by the text books and the cognitive aims of the process of teaching while informal context can be perceived in the interpersonal relations of students with teachers and those among the students (peer group).

Ans to Q.5 Sexual stereotypes are certain sets of attitudes, values, norms, customs and expectations based on social differences between men and women but justified on biological grounds, which shape the differential socialization of men and women. Men are supposed to be independent, capable and aggressive and women, to be dependent, timid and submissive.

Ans to Q.6 The mass media for example, radio, television, films, books, cinema, newspapers, etc. cut across all boundaries of region, religion, sex, caste or class. They convey the same message to a nation-wide population. Therefore, its impact on socialization is crucial. It portrays the messages and images; as in the case of video, film and T.V. etc. They affect the minds of adults as well as children and help to shape and reshape their values, behaviours and expectations through their messages and images.

2.11 REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 MEANING, DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONTROL

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Objectives
- 3.3 Meaning and Definition of Social Control
 - 3.3.1 Definitions
 - 3.3.2 Related Concepts
- 3.4 Social Control, Self-Control, Socialization, and Maladjustment
- 3.5 Goals of Social Control
- 3.6 Need and Importance of Social Control
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Glossary
- 3.9 Check Your Progress: Answer Keys
- 3.10 References

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the early prehistoric days, men used to lead an isolated nomadic life in caves, rock-shelters, forests and stations of river banks. They lived in small groups in solitude in the midst of unfriendly environment and often indulged in relentless wars against the tyrannies of nature. In their quest to overpower the nature, they wanted to form the human association. The human beings saw the ferocious and gigantic animals as their enemies and constant threat to their safety and security. In Neolithic stage, men could succeed in forming larger human congregations. A sort of stability in socio-economic life could be established with the invention of agriculture and domestication of useful animals. The formation of larger congregations could instil a sense of safety and security in human beings but unforeseen problems did accost the human beings every now and then. Group conflicts and clashes became everyday affairs. Human beings by their very nature are selfish individualistic, barbarous, hedonistic, power hungry and conflicting. If they are allowed to act freely, no group or society can function. This gives rise to the need on the part of society to frame certain rules and regulations to restrain the undesirable human conduct and promote the desirable ones. By effective enforcement of the societal rules and regulations every society controls its human force. This Unit presents the meaning, definition and importance of social control.

3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to know;

- the meaning and definition of social control, self-control, socialization and maladjustment;
- the purpose of social control and need of social control; and
- the importance of social control.

3.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CONTROL

The terms 'social control' is broadly concerned with the maintenance of order and stability in society. It may be used in the limited sense of denoting the various specialised means employed to maintain order such as codes, courts, and constables. It is also used to categorise social institutions and their inter-relations insofar as they contribute specifically to social stability e.g. legal, religious, political institutions etc. Social control is one of the most fundamental subjects of sociological discussion. It arises in all discussions about the nature and causes of both stability and change.

3.3.1 Definitions

Let us look at certain definitions of social control in order to know what is contained in the concept.

Some definitions focus on the "order" aspect of social control. For instance Maclver and Page (1985) define social control as the way in which the whole social order becomes consistently interlinked and maintains itself. Some others look at social control as the means by which society establishes and maintains order.

Another set of definition emphasises the aspect of conformity to norms and expectations of the group as the most important element in social control. The emphasis is on all those means and processes whereby a group or a society secures conformity of its member to its expectations. In other words, social control refers to those ways used by a society to bring its wayward members back into line. When we use the term social control we are essentially referring to the processes and means which limit deviations from social norms (Horton and Hunt 1981; Berger 1963; Ogburn and Nimcoff 1978).

Social control has been defined as "the way in which the entire social order adheres and maintains itself- how it operates as a changing equilibrium" (MacIver & Page) , "the patterns of pressure which a society exerts to maintain order and establish rules" (Ogburn and Nimcoff), the process by which social order is (i) established, and (ii) maintained" (Landis), "a collective. term for those processes, planned or unplanned, by which individuals are taught, persuaded, or compelled to conform to the usages and life values of groups"(Roucek).

Thus social control may be defined as any social or cultural means by which systematic and relatively consistent restraints are imposed upon individual behaviour and by which human beings are persuaded and motivated to behave in accordance with the traditions, patterns and value framework thought necessary for the smooth functioning of a group or society.

Social control operates at three levels: group over group-when one group determines the behaviour of the other group; the group over its members when the group controls the conduct of its own members, and individuals over their fellows- when the individuals influence the responses of other individuals.

The main points that emerge from all these definitions about the meaning of social controls are:

- i) The term refers essentially to means and processes whereby certain goals are to be achieved.
- ii) The two most important goals sought to be achieved by social control are :
 - a) Conformity to norms and expectations of the group;
 - b) Maintenance of order in society.
- iii) There is an element of influence, persuasion or compulsion in control. The individual or a group is directed to act in a particular way. Conformity is expected or imposed irrespective of whether one likes it or not.
- iv) The scope of social control is vast. It may operate at different levels. One group may seek to control another group; a group may control its own members or an individual may seek to control another individual. The scope of control ranges from the management of deviants to social planning.

3.3.2 Related Concepts

Here we discuss some concepts which are closely related to social control.

i) The concept of self-control

Self-control implies that imposition of external control is not required to compel the individual to do the right thing in a given situation. In this sense, self-control supplements the mechanisms of social control in producing conformity. But, it should also be remembered that self-control itself, originates in social control. It is the process of social control which instils a sense of inner control in the individual. The relation between self-control and social control can be understood in the following manner: the group applies some sanctions (punishment etc.) on an individual for indulging in deviant behaviour. But many persons are capable of visualising the consequences of their action in advance, and restrain themselves. In this sense, self-control is also a form of social control. From this point of view we can also maintain that both self-control and social control are closely related to yet another process—socialisation, to which we now turn.

ii) Socialization

Socialization is the process by which an individual, from childhood, learns and acquires the cultural characteristics of one's group. He is thus able to participate as a member of the group of society. In childhood, one's parents, for instance, enforce their expectations on the child by a system of reward, punishment and discipline. One also acquires many traits by observing the behaviour of others, and by anticipating the consequences of and reaction to, one's own conduct in different situations. In this way, one develops self-control, a sense of right and wrong. Through the learning process we begin largely to conform to group expectation, very often without any conscious attempt being made on our part to do so. You can cite several examples from your daily life in which you perform many minor and major activities which you are 'supposed' to do, without even being aware of why you are doing so. Thus, socialisation contributes significantly to bringing about effective social control in society. It is only when the process of socialization fails that the individual may begin to act against the expectations of the group. In that case, imposition of sanctions becomes necessary.

Social control also helps in the process of socialization. In so far as socialization involves learning process, a system of reward and punishment is required in accomplishing it. Thus, social control and socialization are mutually related, supplementing each other towards the ultimate objective of ensuring conformity to group norms, and maintenance of social order.

3.4 SOCIAL CONTROL, SELF-CONTROL, SOCIALIZATION, AND SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT

Although social control and, self-control are closely related, yet they differ and can be clearly distinguished. While at the individual level, social control refers to attempts made to influence others according to the established social norms and standards, self-control refers to the individual's attempts to guide and regulate his own behaviour-obviously in the light of some previously established ideal, goal or purpose. Undoubtedly, the goal is determined by the values and folkways of the group of which the individual is a member. The two also differ in their approach. Self-control relates-to the individual and, therefore, is individualistic in nature, while social control relates to the whole society and is institutional in nature. Social control and self-control should be treated as complimentary to each other and latter may be treated as a small part of the former because self-control is derived from and originates in social control.

Social control and socialization are closely interrelated. Social control plays a vital role in the socialization process and socialization helps in maintaining social control. In the process of socialization, individuals are motivated to behave in accordance with the social values, ideals and standards and they are prepared in such a way as to be ready to shoulder their responsibilities as per society's expectations. This process continues throughout the life. The socially undesirable human behaviour is discouraged and sometimes also punished. Thus the social control acts during the socialization process itself. Social control is an extension of the socialization process. Socialization with the accompanying internalization of social norms and values provides essential sources of social control. Sometimes, both social control and

socialization use common techniques to regulate the human behaviour (appreciating and rewarding the socially desirable human behaviour and actions and condemning and punishing the undesirable human behaviour and actions are common to both).

In spite of the similarities visible in social control and socialization, differences are not missing. Socialization relates to the persons who are made to learn the culture of the group and society. Social control is related to all persons, groups and entire social system, and thus its approach is wider than that of socialization. Primary groups play an important role in shaping the human personality while secondary groups and state apparatus assume major responsibility in maintaining social control. Socialization is more concerned with the development of 'self' of the human beings while social control is directed to regulate the external behaviour of individuals, even if the individual is internally unwilling. In the process of socialization, a person himself informally and unconsciously learns many things which become a part and parcel of his personality but in the process of social control, persons are forced to behave in accordance with the formally and consciously described norms and values of society. Socialization is always in line with social and cultural values of a particular society but social control quite often may not be akin to the values of the established socio-cultural milieu. Though there is a marked commonality in many of the means and agencies of socialization and social control, yet the provisions for regulating the human conduct of non-followers may vary. In the socialization, maximum punishment for a person may be his social boycott but in the process of social control, a person of deviant behaviour may be given rigorous imprisonment or even may be hanged to death.

Social control and social maladjustment have been closely interrelated. Whenever the agencies of social control are unable to discharge their functions effectively, the behaviour of individuals and their groups change threatening the stability and continuity of the established social order. Since society is dynamic, changes do take place-sometimes planned and sometimes un-planned, as also sometimes these changes are noticed or remain unnoticed in the behaviour of the individuals and their groups.

Maladjustment indicates a condition or process which involves the inability or unwillingness of an individual or group to fall in line with prevailing psychological, social or cultural standards - either their own or those of an external system. Maladjustment of an individual, group or institution is not necessarily an absolute condition. While maladjustment may result in conflict or conditions that are destructive of the cherished feelings and values, it must be accepted that maladjustment is as constant a social phenomenon as adjustment is. Social and psychological life is a process of continual change. Adjustment is an illusory condition following a preceding spell of maladjustment or a threat of maladjustment.

Individuals' failure to cope with the existing social system leads them to maladjustment. Since pressure of societal norms and standards on various groups of society is not uniform, the possibility of individuals'/groups' unequal response towards existing means of social control increases. Moreover, if the agencies of social control are too harsh in their use of control mechanisms or are supportive of the exploitative nature of the state, the chances of maladjustment in society are probably more. On the contrary, if the agencies of social control

are soft towards individual group behaviour and give reasonable and fair chance to mould their behaviour as per changing norms and standards of society, the chances of inverse relationship between social control and maladjustment are likely to be more perceptible.

3.5 GOALS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

From many of the definitions of social control, which we have reviewed earlier, it becomes clear that social control is supposed to achieve several important goals. Some of these goals are:

i) Conformity

One of the aims of social control is to bring about conformity in society. Social control mechanisms are employed to control, check or prevent deviant behaviour. As we shall see in Unit 31, deviant behaviour is dysfunctional to society in several ways. The objective of social control is to safeguard the group against such dysfunctional consequences of deviant behaviour.

ii) Uniformity

A related objective of social control is to produce uniformity of behaviour. This does not mean that all the members have to behave alike. It only implies that there should be some co-ordinations, among the several interrelated activities performed by different people. For example, movement of traffic on a road will be impossible if some traffic rules (keeping to the left etc.) are not followed by all road users. A game cannot be played if uniform rules are not followed by all teams and its members. In every sphere of social life some uniformity of behaviour is not only expected, but is also essential.

ii) Solidarity

This is a very important objective of social control. As Maclver and Page (1985) have noted, social control ensures order and solidarity in society. Society is constituted of several parts and units. These different parts have to maintain equilibrium with each other, and with the whole to ensure social solidarity and stability. The mechanisms of social control are directed at maintaining this equilibrium among the parts, and between the parts and the whole.

iii) Continuity

Social control is also necessary to maintain and preserve the accumulated culture of the group. By compelling or inducing individuals to conform to the prevailing norms and values, continuity of these cultural characteristics is ensured. For example, when parents insist on their children following family customs or practices, their continuity over generations is sought to be assured.

iv) Social Change

Social control is employed not only to conserve the existing patterns, but also sometimes to induce desired social changes. In our country, many methods of persuasion, inducement, and compulsion are used to bring about desired changes in some social customs, attitudes and behaviour. Prescribing the age of marriage, 'Two child' family norm, removal of untouchability, dowry systems etc. are some of the examples of attempts to bring about social change through various means of social control.

3.6 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONTROL

The progress of any society depends upon the effective functioning of its various groups, organizations and institutions, which is often jeopardized by the clash of interests of its members. Individuals as well as groups want to serve their interests without caring for others. The lack of opportunities for all aggravates the problem further and the dominant group members/groups want to monopolize and maintain their hegemony over limited societal resources. Also, the various types of 'isms' prevailing in society hamper the smooth social system, and therefore, exercise of some sort of control on the part of society to limit the fissiparous and selfish tendencies of human beings become imperative. It will be difficult to maintain social equilibrium without proper adjustment among various social units and therefore, arises the need to control the deviant behaviour of people and promote the socially desirable actions of others. Social control helps us to achieve stability in the social organization, as individuals are not allowed to act contrary to the norms of society. They are persuaded and motivated to behave in accordance with the established social norms and values. Consequently, the instability and uncertainty make room for the regularity and continuity in the society.

Social control is also necessary to maintain the healthy traditions of our society and to transfer them from one generation to another. Traditions are the safe custodians of our heritage and culture. Through social control people are motivated and compelled to follow the traditions.

The unity in group can only be maintained by the effective system of social control. The group members belong to different socio-cultural backgrounds and want to achieve different personal objectives. To keep all the members united by striving towards group goals is made feasible by social control which does not allow selfish interests of the individuals to come in the way of group goals.

Social control is also required to bring compatibility in thoughts, ideas, behaviour patterns, attitudes and perceptions of the individuals, because devoid of it, society cannot function effectively.

Cooperation is the key of all success. If society is to survive, the desired cooperation of all people is required. In case of lack of this cooperation, no unit or group can function. It is indeed the strength of the human groups. Social control helps us in achieving the cooperation of all.

Social control provides social security to the people. Human beings are so helpless and weak that their existence is not possible without the help of others. Social control keeps a check on the forces endangering the safety and security of the people and prepares them to face the realities of the world. Social control is badly needed to bring the selfish nature of man under control because normally, nobody feels happy being controlled, subordinated and directed by others. Everyone wants to control, exercise authority on the subordinates and direct as many persons as possible, but the fact of the matter is that society is a mix of persons who direct and those who are directed, those who guide and also those who are guided. In fact, social control, by keeping the 'free will' of people under a corrective restraint, facilitates the smooth functioning of society.

It is vividly clear that because of social control society comes into existence, social order is maintained and aspirations of the people are fulfilled.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3.1

Note :

- I. Use the space provided for your answer.
- II. Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q.1 What do you understand by social control?

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Q.2 What is the importance of social control?

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have given the meaning and definition of social control. The purposes of social control have also been pointed out. Social control vis-a-vis self-control, socialization and maladjustment has also been examined. The need and importance of social control i.e. why social control is required have also been discussed. The twin goals of social control are:

- i) to establish and maintain order in society; and
- ii) to check deviant tendencies and behaviour.

3.8 GLOSSARY

- Social order:** A condition/situation of a society/group characterized by the of harmonious social relationships.
- Conformity:** Behaviour that is in accord with the expectations of a social group. It reflects compliance to the rules or social norms and is expressed in responses that are prescribed by group customs -or norms.
- Human behaviour:** Any response or reaction of an individual i.e. anything an individual does, says, thinks or feels.

3.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q.1: Social control may be defined as any social or cultural means by which systematic and relatively consistent restraints are imposed upon individual behaviour and by which human beings are persuaded and motivated to behave in accordance, with the traditions, patterns and value framework thought necessary for the smooth functioning of a group or society.

Answer to Q.2: First of all, social control maintains social equilibrium without which proper adjustment among various social units is not possible. Second, there is a need to control the deviant behaviour of the people on the one hand, and promote the socially desirable actions on the others. Thirdly, social control helps us to achieve the stability in the social organization as individuals are not allowed to act contrary to the norms of the social system. Fourthly, social control is also necessary to maintain the healthy traditions of our society and to transfer them from one generation to another. Fifthly, unity in group members belonging to different socio-cultural background can only be maintained by the effective system of social control.

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UNIT 4 TYPES AND AGENCIES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Learning Objectives
- 4.3 Types of Social Control
 - 4.3.1 Informal Social Control
 - 4.3.2 Formal Social Control
 - 4.3.3 Conscious and Unconscious Control
 - 4.3.4 Direct and Indirect Control
 - 4.3.5 Positive and Negative Social Control
 - 4.3.6 Organised, Unorganised and Automatic Social Control
 - 4.3.7 Autocratic and Democratic Social Control
- 4.4 Mechanisms, Agencies and Consequences of Social Control
 - 4.4.1 Types of Mechanisms
 - 4.4.2 Agencies of Social Control
 - 4.4.3 Consequences of Social Control
- 4.5 Limits on Social Control
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Glossary
- 4.8 Check Your Progress: Answer Keys
- 4.9 References

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In sociology, the study of social control occupies a place of central importance. The existence and persistence of organized social life is not possible without some minimum degree of control over its members. Social control is needed for maintaining social order. What do we mean by “social order”? A social order refers to a system of people, relationships and customs, all these together operating smoothly to accomplish the work of a society (Horton and Hunt 1981). No society can function effectively unless behaviour can be predicted. Orderliness depends on a network of roles. The network of reciprocal rights and duties is kept in force through social control.

In this unit we shall first focus on the meaning and nature of social control with the help of some definitions, including an examination of a few concepts which are closely related to social control. The discussion will be followed by a look at the goals and methods of social

control. Then, we will describe the various types of mechanisms, means and consequences of social control. Finally, we will also discuss the factors which limit the effectiveness of social control.

4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- define social control and describe its nature along with some concepts related to it;
- list the goals of social control;
- identify and illustrate the consequences of social control as it affects the individuals as well as the society; and
- describe the important factors that set a limit to the effectiveness of social control.

4.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Every society exercises control over its members in order to maintain the social order. However, forms of social control are not uniform in all the societies due to inherent differences in their cultural background, in the nature of personal relations, social relations and social conditions. As members of society have different objectives, interests and ideology, regulations of their behaviour by one set of means of social control becomes almost impossible. We have urban as well as rural societies; closed and open societies; traditional and modern societies; societies following democratic as also the autocratic norms. Therefore, variations in the types of social control are but natural. Society keeps its grip over the members sometimes by rewarding and sometimes by punishing them, at times society uses its formal and organised means while at times it adopts informal and unorganised means to exercise its power. Based on the classification given by various authors, following types of social control are described.

4.3.1 Informal Social Control

This is also known as primary social control, as it is more effective in what sociologists call primary groups. The primary groups are relatively more homogeneous, small, compact and intimate groups. Members are tied to each other and to the group by feelings of personal loyalty. A family, playgroups, neighbourhood, rural community, and a simple primitive society are some examples of such compact social groupings. In such societies every individual, is constantly surrounded by very potent and subtle mechanisms of social control. Within a family the individual is under the control of his or her parents and other family members. Family, in turn, is under the control of neighbourhood or kinship groups, and these, in turn, are under the watchful control of the whole society. Thus, no individual or group can be free from social control.

We may say that in such social settings, social control exists like a set of concentric circles surrounding individuals and groups. The important characteristics of this type of control are that it is informal, spontaneous, and unplanned. Usually the group shows its disapproval to

the deviating member by ridicule gossip, opprobrium, criticism, ostracism and sometimes application of physical force and coercion. Since the group is compact, ties are strong, members are personally known and the individual has little choice of an alternative group's membership. He cannot afford to ignore the disapproval of his groups and so he has to conform to his group's expectations. Such methods of control are effective not only in primitive societies in which primary groups and relations abound, but are also effective in modern complex societies such as ours, particularly within secondary groups (such as voluntary associations, clubs and trade unions etc.) where such informal controls are effective to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Activity 4.1

Have you ever experienced social ostracism in your own or in the life of someone whom you know? Write an essay on the event(s) and relate in to the notion of "social control in my society" in about two pages. Share your essay with those of other students at your study centre.

4.3.2 Formal Social Control

This is also known as secondary social control as it is usually found in larger, secondary social groups. Modern complex societies such as ours, are good examples of such social groupings. In such societies we find a large number of groups, which are characterised by impersonal relations, and are oriented to certain specific objectives. A political party, trade union, factory, office, students association, may be some examples. In these secondary groupings, relations among members are more formal and less intimate. Their relationships mean that informal controls such as ridicule, criticism or 'gossip' do not operate here. It is a well-known fact in sociology that informal groups do develop within such formal organisations. In a university or a college, certain cliques' informal controls are more effective. The point is that such informal groups which develop within formal organisations may either inhibit or facilitate formal secondary controls and affect the performance of the organisation.

Generally speaking, in secondary groupings informal controls take their place. Both positive sanctions in the form of reward, honour, and negative sanctions by way of punishments, expulsion etc. are used in this form of control. In the larger society, such controls are exemplified by law, police, courts, prisons and other agencies of law enforcement. Apart from these more visible forms, formal control mechanisms also include well organised propaganda through mass media, to 'engineer' social control in society. In large secondary groupings informal controls are weakened due to growing anonymity, mobility, and conflicting norms and values. Intimacy declines and members do not have personal or emotional feelings towards each other. They frequently move from one place to another or from one group to another. Thus, they can easily escape from the controls of some particular group. Moreover, in a complex society, there is always a conflict of norms and values of different groups. One group may approve a conduct which may be disapproved by some

other group. Under such circumstances, recourse is ultimately taken to the formal agencies of social control.

4.3.3 Conscious and Unconscious Control

The American sociologists C.H. Cooley and L. L. Bernard have described the forms of social control as conscious and unconscious. The human behaviour can be mainly categorised as conscious and unconscious. The conscious behaviour of human beings refers to such acts and actions as are done deliberately and in a planned way e.g. a subordinate employee does not sit in the chair of his boss and also, while talking to his boss he remains alert and attentive. On the other hand, some human actions are done unconsciously and the person himself does not know why he is doing so because repeated behaviour pattern becomes a part and parcel of his personality, e.g. while putting I on our clothes, we follow a certain pattern (eg. we put on our undergarments first and not after having put on upper garments). In short, in the situation where we behave cautiously and deliberately, the system is termed as conscious social control, and in the situations we behave spontaneously and unconsciously, the system of control is termed as unconscious social control. In the first type, we can include the prevalent patterns of eating and taking water, untouchability, and marriage within the caste system. In the latter type, we can include the control which is exercised under the influence of traditions, sanskars and religious prescriptions.

4.3.4 Direct and Indirect Control

Karl Mannheim has discussed the direct and indirect forms of social control. Whenever control on human behaviour is exercised by very close persons such as parents, friends, teachers, neighbours, etc. it is direct type of social control. Indirect social control refers to the control which is done by the social and physical environment, different groups and institutions. The impact of direct type of social control is more and durable while the impact of indirect type of social control is less and short lived.

4.3.5 Positive and Negative Social Control

Kimball Young has described positive and negative forms of social control. Positive social control depends on the positive motivation of the individual to conform. Such type of control can be affected through promise of rewards ranging from tangible material benefits to the social approval. A more fundamental form of positive social control depends on the individuals' internalization of social norms, value and role expectations during the process of socialization. The individual's belief in social norms motivates him to conform. Appreciation letters given to the students teams on their success in the examination/games, conferment of gallantry awards to soldiers vigilantly engaged in guarding national boundaries against enemies from across the borders, kissing babies by parents for understanding their signals a=, examples of positive social control.

In the process of negative forms of social control, deviant behaviour of individuals is discouraged and punished. Violation of societal rules and regulations often invites the wrath

of law protecting agencies and infliction of punishment may range from simple threat to threat of life, imprisonment and fines. At times, negative social control is very useful as persons know that if they are caught, they will be surely punished for their wrong doings. Punishment, ridicule, criticism, excommunication, imprisonment, fine and capital sentence are the examples of negative social control.

4.3.6 Organised, Unorganised and Automatic Social Control

Gurvitch and Moore have discussed the forms of social control as organised, unorganised and automatic. Under the process of organised social control human behaviour is influenced by a set of social agencies having clearly defined 'do's and 'don'ts' for individuals. Educational institutions, family, state, etc. exercise such type of social control. Unorganised social control influences the personality of human beings through the means of rites and rituals, customs and traditions, folkways and mores, etc. In the automatic social control, individuals are themselves motivated to act in order to meet their felt needs. Persons themselves embrace control over their immediate and long-term needs based on their experiences, values, ideals, thinking and mores. Religious prescriptions are examples of such type of social control which are not imposed upon individuals but are willingly and automatically adopted by them. Such type of control is enduring.

4.3.7 Autocratic and Democratic Social Control

Lapiere has identified autocratic and democratic forms of social control. Whenever any administrative agency or the authority uses its force to attain the objectives other than those defined and recognized by society, autocratic form of social control comes into picture. Authorities often exploit the material and human resources to serve their vested interests and do not hesitate to indulge in inhuman acts. Military ruled states under despotic leadership are the living examples of autocratic social control wherein people's wishes are crushed. If the control is exercised by the agencies or authorities established by the people themselves and if their wishes are taken into consideration while framing rules and regulations, the democratic social control comes into effect. People are motivated to behave in accordance with the democratic norms. Persuasion, motivation, discussion, consultation and participation are the commonly used techniques in democratic social control as compared to autocratic social control wherein compulsion, intimidation, exploitation, threat and torture are the often used techniques.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4.1

Note:

- I. Use the space given below for your answer.
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.1 Write in brief about formal and informal forms of social control.

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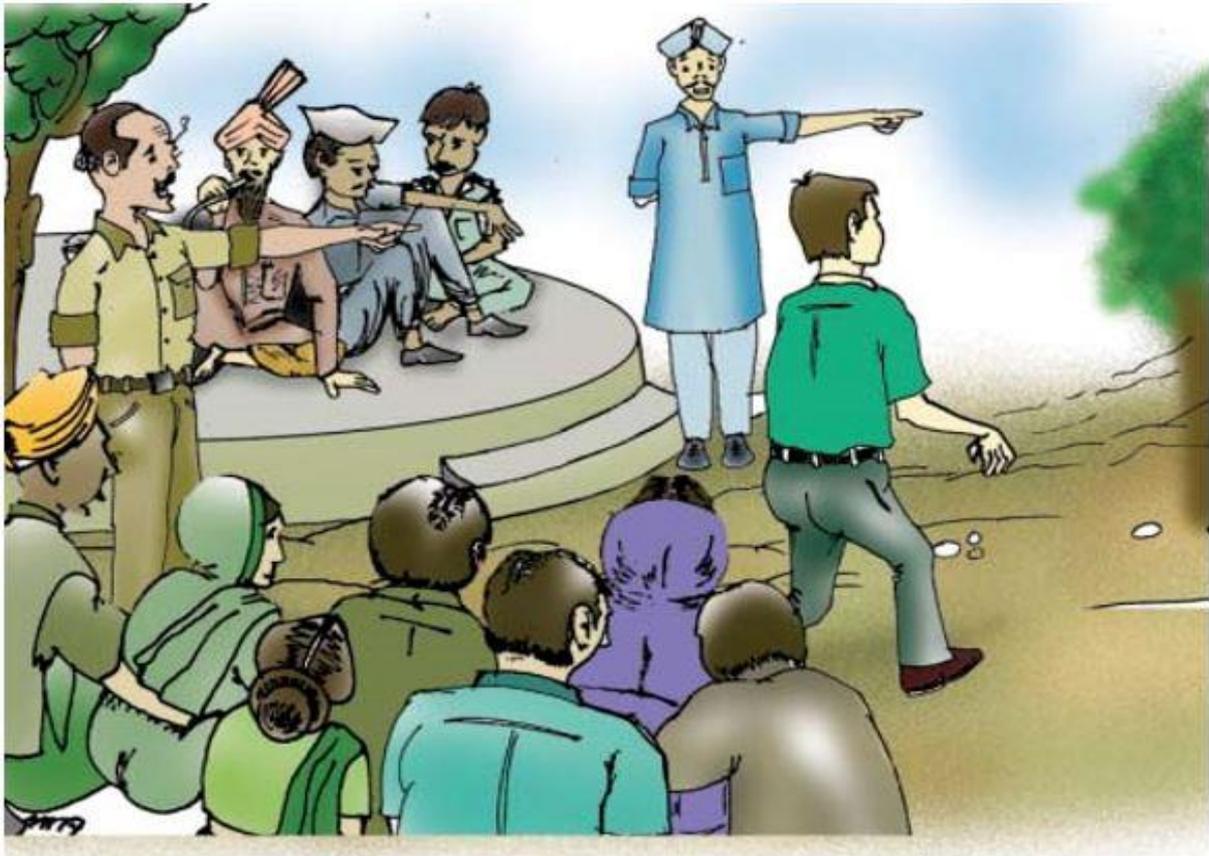
4.4 MECHANISMS, AGENCIES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Every society has devised various mechanisms to exercise control. Social control mechanisms are viewed by sociologists as all those social arrangements that (i) prevent such strains as may develop from the individual's place in the social structure and (ii) prevent the strains from leading to deviance (see Brearley 1947:65). Every society has certain means to exercise social control, and there are clear consequences of exercising social control for promoting stability and conformity in societies.

4.4.1 Types of Mechanisms

Mechanisms of social control can be classified into the following four categories:

- i) **Preventive mechanisms:** These mechanisms are designed to prevent such situations from developing that might lead to deviance. Socialization, social pressures, establishment of role priorities, force are some of the mechanisms through which conformity is promoted or the occurrence of deviance is prevented.
- ii) **Mechanisms to manage tensions:** Institutionalized safety valves like humor, games and sports, leisure, religious rituals are regarded as outlets for the tensions generated by social restraints, and cultural inconsistencies within a society.
- iii) **Mechanisms to check or change deviant behavior:** Sanctions are used by every society to bring about conformity, and check or change deviant behaviour. Sanctions have been classified into :
 - a) **Psychological sanctions:** Negative sanctions are reproof, ridicule non-acceptance, ostracism etc. Positive sanctions include acceptance in the group, praise, invitation to inner circle events, verbal or physical pat on the back gifts etc.
 - b) **Physical sanctions:** These are mostly negative. The most important forms of physical sanctions are expulsion, physical punishment and extermination.
 - c) **Economic sanctions :** These include positive rewards like promotion of a loyal sincere worker, grant of tenders to civic minded businessmen etc., or negative sanctions like threat of loss or reduction in one's income (e.g. threat of discharge by employer may prevent the employee from continuing his strike), economic boycott etc.



Village Ex-Communicates one of their member

EX-COMMUNICATION: A MECHANISM OF SOCIAL CONTROL

- iv) **Propaganda Mechanisms:** Another important mechanism that can bring about change in the desired direction, is propaganda or moulding public opinion. Propaganda is a deliberate attempt to control the behaviour and interrelationships of members in order to change the feelings, attitudes and values. For example, the efforts of the government to control population growth through family planning propaganda (see Horton and Hunt 1981).

4.4.2 Agencies of Social Control

Agencies are the instruments by which social control is exercised. Agency refers to those groups, organisations and authorities that are responsible for implementing social control in an effective manner. They have the ultimate say as to what is to be implemented and what is not to be implemented. Agencies use both the means- formal as well as informal. Agencies have power to reward or punish the individuals. Family, educational institutions and the state are the agencies of social control. A brief discussion of these is attempted below:

- i) **Custom**

Social codes found in every society provide standardised ways of doing things. These ways, known as customs, have come to be accepted in the group or society. Some degree of

pressure is always exerted on the individual to make one conform to customs. In case, they are violated the group applies some sanctions or penalties of varying degrees of severity. The severity would depend on the importance attached to the particular customary regulation.

Custom is sustained by common acceptance. Informal social pressures are brought to bear, in the case of violation of customs. Violation of mores, on the other hand, inspire intense reaction and the punishment may involve expulsion from the group, harsh ridicule, imprisonment or in some cases even death. To function effectively in a culture it is imperative that one learns the appropriate folkways (customs and conventions) and mores of that culture. Let us now see the role of law as a means of social control.

ii) **Law**

Certain norms become laws when a society feels strongly, about them, Laws are formal standardised expressions of norms, enacted by legislative bodies to regulate certain types of behaviour. Laws not merely state what behaviours are permitted and not permitted, but they also state the punishment for violating the law.

As we shift from simple societies to the modern ones, the role of law as a mechanism of social control assumes greater significance. In modern, complex societies the more informal types of social control are weakened. Though law may itself be based on custom, it has three distinct characteristics which separate it from custom: first, it has politicality as it is upheld by the political authority of the state. Second, it has uniformity, as it is applicable throughout the jurisdiction of the state on all groups or parts of society. Third, it has penal sanction, as each law is enforced on the strength of penalty imposed by the State (Courts) in case of violation. There are distinct agencies such as police, courts, prisons etc. to enforce the law. However, when a law does not reflect folkways and mores, its enforcement is likely to be ignored or given low priority. For example, even though the minimum age at marriage for girls and boys in India is fixed by law, many communities ignore these prescriptions. When there is a conflict between custom and law, it becomes difficult to impose the law. We will now turn to the role of religion.

Activity 4.2

Scan the newspapers of a week for any news item which describes how the customs of a community clash with the legal edict such as, practice of dowry, or sati. Write a page on the event and its sociological implications. Compare your note with those of other students at your study centre.

iii) **Religion**

Sociologists are interested in studying how religion is organised, and what impact it has on the members of a society in terms of controlling their behaviour. They are also interested in the kinds of belief system developed by people, in different situations and circumstances, and how religious beliefs change over time as external situations and circumstances change. All religions are seen to have the following elements: (a) things considered sacred (b) a set of believers (c) a set of rituals and ceremonies (d) a system of beliefs such as a creed, doctrine or a holy book (e) a certain form of organisation.

Religion contributes to stability and order in society in that it reinforces social norms providing sanctions for violation of norms and reinforcing basic values. Today, with the explosion of scientific knowledge, some customs, religious and moral interpretations of behaviour are no longer considered binding or accepted. The sacred books of most of religions include rules for ordering social relationships. It is especially explicit about matters pertaining to the family, marriage, divorce and inheritance. Though laws are challenging some of the practices upheld by religious teachings, beliefs and experiences associated with religion are still seen to be essential for both personal identity, and social cohesion. Education too is an important means of social control. Let us see how this is so.

iv) **Education**

The institution of education helps to control human behaviour through socialization of the young and adult members of society. The different levels of formal education transmit the culture of society, to individuals within the society. In discharging their socialisation function, schools and colleges transmit many of the society's values. The individuals learn to conform to rules, be honest, and be diligent and to co-operate with others etc. Another value of education is that it prepares students for their adult occupational roles. Education is further valued for the understanding it imparts, about the social and physical environment. However, the fact that education tries to impart such values, is no indication that everyone who goes to school and college learns and accepts these values. Were the educational system and educators and other socialisers always successful, there would be no deviance and no social conflict. This brings us to the topic of family.

v) **Family**

Across the world, the institution of family performs certain important functions. These include socialisation, imparting of affection and emotional support, regulation of sex and reproduction. Family is not only an important agency of socialisation but of social control as well. It is in the family that an individual normally has his most intimate, and important social relation. Some of human beings' most basic needs, both physical and psychological are fulfilled within the family. Though the more formal and more coercive measures of social control are generally absent in the family, other informal means such as ridicule, criticism, disapproval, loss of prestige, withdrawal of rewards etc. are very potent means of control. In fact, an individual always seeks emotional support of his or her near and dear ones in the

family in times of stress and tension. The mere threat of withdrawal of this support, is sufficient to bring the recalcitrant member back into line. Every family has its own set of moral values and customs. These are enforced upon its members, particularly the younger ones through disciplinary measures and a system of rewards and punishments. We now turn to leadership.

vi) **Leadership**

It can play a very important role in social control. It develops out of the process of interaction itself. Leaders have guided the destinies of groups, communities, and nations. If the leader enjoys group support, his or her suggestions and directions lead the members towards some common values and goals, and may help to promote order and stability in society. In this process mass media can play a very important role.

vii) **Mass Media**

In traditional smaller societies face to face contact was the only means of communication. In modern technological societies the media of mass communication, such as newspapers, radio and television, are a means of not only communication but also of social control. Much of the public opinion and propaganda, for example, (and other social and cultural groups) make use of these means to mould public opinion, and to change or control attitudes and behaviour of the vast mass of population. New values and life styles, fashions, wants, ideas etc. are thrust upon the public with a view to redirect and control their behaviour in a particular way. We will now consider the role of force in social control.

viii) **Force**

Though some sociologists have neglected or under emphasised the element of force or physical coercion in social relationships, the role of force in social control cannot be underestimated. In some types of societies, such as the totalitarian states and colonial regimes, physical force and violence are used as significant instruments of control. In fact, it can be asserted that physical violence is the oldest and ultimate means of social control. Even modern, liberal democratic societies maintain police and armed forces. This signifies the fact that the resort to force and violence is the ultimate answer to many issues, when other means have failed. On the other hand, communal and caste violence, are examples of how force is used by interested groups to control and coerce each other though it is not legally sanctioned.

ix) **Language**

Language gives medium and meaning to the feelings of people. It is because of language that human beings have advanced on the path of progress. Language keeps a watch on human behaviour. The laws, customs, traditions etc. are all expressed through language. Language helps in social control by socializing individuals, transferring culture, enabling person's adjustment to the society, bringing emotional integration, self-controlling and disseminating ideas that express social values, norms and standards.

x) Punishment and Reward

Punishment aims to reform behaviour of individuals for their well-being. Socially unaccepted human actions are discouraged and punished so that persons may not repeat them. Individuals are sometimes punished for not bringing desired improvements in themselves. The severity of punishment depends upon the nature of crime.

Rewards are given to those who imbibe societal norms and values. To desire appreciation and patting for one's good and exemplary work is human nature. Rewards thus act as effective motivator and inspire the persons to put in their mite in the attainment of societal goals. It also works as a tonic for those who fear to initiate any work just because of the fear of failure. Rewards can be given in many ways starting just from the words of appreciation to cash and conferment of medals' and honours.

Thus punishment and reward are important means of social control.

xi) Folkways

Folkways play an important role in social control. These are developed by their repeated use. Folkways are indicative of social norms or standards of behaviour that are socially approved but not considered necessarily of moral significance. Folkways provide traditional definitions of proper ways of behaving in a particular society or group. Individuals conform to folkways automatically without rational analysis. They are based primarily upon customs, passed on from generation to generation through the socialization of children. Folkways are not enforced by law but form part and parcel of informal social control. Since the people in society follow them, the children also follow. Thus, folkways help as a means of social control.

xii) Mores

When a feeling of group's well-being is attached to folkways, they take the form of mores. Mores refer to those social norms that provide the moral standard of behaviour of a group or society. Conformity to mores is not optional and non-conformity is severely sanctioned. Group members feel an emotional attachment to the mores and their safe preservation is thought to be essential to the group's welfare. In common parlance, the term is confined to those standards of behaviour that depend upon informal sanctions and have not been enacted into law. Mores may be categorized as positive and negative. Under the category of positive mores, people are instructed to follow certain things; for example, "always speak truth, take pity on poor, be honest to the core, obey your parents and teachers, etc." Negative mores check us from doing certain things. "don't commit theft, don't tell a lie, don't hurt anybody, etc". Mores are the means of informal and unorganized form of social control. Individual cannot dare not to abide by mores as they feel that their group's welfare will be in peril. Mores are more influential and powerful to the formally laid down rules and regulations.

xiii) Propaganda

Today, propaganda is one of the important and effective means of social control. It controls human beings by providing them useful information about good and bad and helps organisation/institution to get feedback from the social groups. Propaganda is a conscious, systematic and organized effort designated deliberately to manipulate or influence the actions, decisions, thinking patterns or beliefs of the people in a specified direction on an important issue. Generally, propaganda is thought to be an exercise in manipulating public opinion by presenting false or rosy pictures, trying to hide the underlying facts. Newspapers, magazines, literature, radio, television, cinema, exhibitions, fairs, meetings, hats, festivals, etc. are the important devices of propaganda. Propaganda can also serve a positive social purpose. For example, by propaganda, we have successfully made the masses Aware of the prevalent social evils and contemporary issues. The messages of great leaders are also conveyed to the masses by propaganda. Information about the schemes and projects started by government also reaches the people through propaganda. Human behaviour to a large extent is controlled and regulated by effective use of propaganda.

xiv) Public Opinion

Public opinion means a conclusion or judgement of the people about a particular event, object or situation. It is a specific manifestation of the people's attitude towards a particular problem. Public opinion can be termed as the most important means of social control. Public opinion has always been a prime concern for the policy makers in all the systems of governance. In fact, the success or failure of any scheme or plan largely depends upon the favourable/unfavourable public opinion. However, it may be borne in mind that public opinion is not always rational; sometimes it finds expression in opposition to the legal or constitutionally laid down provisions. It may also be mentioned that it is not a conclusive decision of all the people or majority of the people or a single person. But even then, it is important because it affects the collective interests of the group in questions. The press, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, leaders, political parties, religious and educational institutions all play a decisive role in the formation of public opinion. Public opinion by making the wishes of the people known to the policy makers facilitates effective policy making, leading to larger public happiness.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4.2

Note:

- I. Use the space provided for your answer.
- II. Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

Q.2 List out the major agencies of social control.

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4.4.3 Consequences of Social Control

Though social control is seen as necessary for promoting continuing stability and conformity in societies, it can become dysfunctional at times. The following are some of the dysfunctional aspects of social control.

i) Exploitation

Social control may sometimes become a subtle means of exploitation. Some of the dominant groups or individuals may simply use it to fulfil their own vested interests. These interests may be political, economic or social. In such cases, the real motivations are hidden under the cover of some laudable objectives. A ruling party may try to perpetuate its rule, or a business firm may try to sell its substandard goods by means of utilising the techniques of social control.

ii) Inhibiting Reform and Change

Social control may have limiting consequences in that it may sometimes inhibit creativity, and obstruct attempts at constructive reforms and social changes.

iii) Psychological Pressures

Social control may also exert enormous amount of emotional and psychological pressures on some individuals. The best example is that of the institutions such as the prisons and mental hospitals. The strict regime and oppressive atmosphere sometimes create mental tensions and even illnesses among them. Similarly, where parents have very strict standards of discipline, their children's personalities do not develop in a normal way. In repressive police-states, many individuals, likewise, suffer from stress and tension. Thus, the individual has to pay a price for social control in psychological terms.

iv) Social Tensions

Social control may also lead to social tensions, particularly in a large, complex society. Here, there may be different groups with their distinctive interests, norms, and values which may conflict with each other. When attempts are made by one or more groups to impose their own standards on others, conflict and struggle become inevitable.

4.5 LIMITS ON SOCIAL CONTROL

Effectiveness of social control is limited due to the following factors:

- i) Each group is organized around norms and values. Social control is intended to

check deviation from these standards. Yet, it is not possible to contain deviation completely. Some deviation from prescribed norms will always be there. Each group or society has to determine the limit of tolerance of deviant conduct and thus set a realistic limit on social control.

- ii) The effectiveness of social control is also limited by the degree of consistency in the cultural directives. If the cultural prescriptions are uncertain and inconsistent, then social control cannot operate successfully. This is why in a rapidly changing society, in which normative standards become inconsistent, mechanisms of social control are generally weak. Individuals may not know what is expected of them in a particular situation.
- iii) In a complex society, it is not generally possible to impose social control uniformly on all groups which are divided on the basis of class, caste, religion, race etc. Sometimes the uniform application of law also encounters numerous difficulties. In our country, despite the constitutional directive to have a uniform civil code, it has not been possible to evolve one so far.
- iv) Social control implies huge economic costs to the society. The control of deviance requires a disproportionate share of societal attention and resources. Huge expenditure has to be incurred on the establishment of social control agencies such as the police, prisons, mental hospitals, etc. There is a limit beyond which a poor country such as ours cannot afford to deploy such resources at the cost of other development programmes.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4.3

Note:

- I. Use the space given below for your answer.
- II. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Q.3 What are the four major mechanisms to check deviant behaviour? Use two lines for your answer.

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Q.4 In traditional society, mass media is the only source of social control. Tick the correct box.

Yes

No

Q.5 Mention three dysfunctional aspects of social control. Use three lines for your answer.

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

In the previous unit, we have focused on the nature, approaches, goals and importance of social control. We have discussed that social control is a pervasive feature of social life. Social control means that every society has some rules which have to be obeyed, and some standards of conduct which have to be followed.

You also learnt that different societies have different methods to exercise control. Various types of social control are discussed here. Some of the important mechanisms and agencies of social control discussed in this unit are custom, law, religion, education, family, leadership, mass media, force etc. Then, we have also looked at some of the consequences of social control from the point of view of both the society and the individual. Finally, we pointed out some of the factors that limit the effectiveness of social control.

4.7 GLOSSARY

Dysfunctional consequences: Certain results which are not recognised by the social norms.

Social category: Analytical tool used to categorise people having some characteristics in common viz., occupation class, middle class etc.

Social restraints: Collective opposition against non-conformity to social norms and institutions.

Social sanction: Punishment given for the non-conformity to social norms.

4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: ANSWER KEYS

Answer to Q.1: The formal social control has the sanction of state and state authority is used to regulate the human behaviour. It adopts written and well defined set of rules and regulations, lays down a formal system of punishment for those who do not conform. The state also, establishes the laws, police, jails and judicial institutions for the trial and punishment. Informal social control influenced by belief, customs, traditions, criticism, public opinion, religion etc. 'is exercised by the society. In the primitive tribal and simple rural societies, informal social control has been more influential while in the modern and complex societies, formal social control is more effective and visible.

Answer to Q.2: Social control is exercised in a number of ways by the authorities concerned. Some of these are: belief, social suggestions, social ideals, art, leader, humour and ridicule, fashion, language, punishment, rewards folkways, mores, propaganda, custom, public opinion, religion and morality, law.

Answer to Q.3: a) customs; b) law; c) religion, d) education, and e) family

Answer to Q.4: No.

Answer to Q.5: a) It may lead to exploitation of the weaker section by the dominant one.
b) It may cause psychological pressure.
c) It may cause social tension.

4.9 REFERENCES

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