



Agencies of Socialization: Family, School, Peer Groups and Mass Media : A Review

Dr. Lalit Kumar

Abstract : In general, it may be said that the total society is the agency for socialisation and that each person with whom one comes into contact and interact is in some way an agent of socialization. Socialization is found in all interactions but the most influential interaction occurs in particular groups which are referred to as agencies of socialization.



The obvious beginning of the process for the new-born child is his immediate family group, but this is soon extended to many other groups. Other than the family, the most important are the schools, the peer groups (friends circle) and the mass media.

Key Words : Socialization, children etc.

Agency 1. The Family:

The family gets the baby first. Hence the process of socialisation begins in the family. A child is born with some basic abilities that are genetically transmitted through germplasm. These abilities and capacities are shaped in ways determined by culture.

The mother with whom the relation of the child is the most intimate plays a significant role in the process of moulding the child in the initial stages. Subsequently, father and older siblings transmit to the child many other values, knowledge and skill that children are expected to acquire in that particular society.

Agency 2. The Peer Group:

As the child grows older, his contemporaries begin to influence him. He spends most of his spare hours outside his work and study schedule with his peers in the playground and places outside his home. The attraction of peers is virtually irresistible to him.



He learns from them and they also learn from him. With the passage of time, the peer group influence surpasses that of parents significantly. It is not surprising that teen age is the age of parent-child misunderstanding.

In the socialisation of the child, the members of the family, particularly those who exercise authority over him, and the members of his peer group exercise two different kinds of influence upon him. Both authoritarian relationships (typified by the former) and equalitarian relationships (typified by the latter) are equally significant to him.

Agency 3. The School:

When the child comes to the school, his formal indoctrination into the culture of the society begins. He is exposed to a wider background than hitherto known to him. He is formally introduced to the lore and the learning, the arts and the sciences, the values and the beliefs, the customs and taboos of the society from a wider circle, his teachers play a very significant role.

The child may admire, respect and love some of his teachers. The impression which they make during this impressionable age lasts almost throughout his life.

Agency 4. The Books:

In literate societies another important agency of socialisation is the printed word in books and magazines. Our cultural world—experiences and knowledge, values and beliefs, superstitions and prejudices—is expressed in words.

“Words rush at us in torrent and cascade; they leap into our vision as in newspaper, magazine and textbook..... The words are always written by someone and these people too—authors and editors and advertisers—join the teachers, the peers and the parents in the socialisation process”.

Agency 5. The Mass Media:

Apart from newspapers which carry printed words, the two other mass media, viz., the radio and television, exercise tremendous influence in the socialisation process. They “assault our ears”



and communicate directly their messages and these messages also “contain in capsule form the premises of our culture, its attitudes and ideologies”.

The role of television, in particular, is very significant. It communicates directly to both our ears and eyes and thus leaves a strong impression.

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