CHAPTER II

POLITICAL SOCIALISATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political socialisation is an emerging concept in Political Science and it provides the key to the understanding of political stability and political development. It studies politics at the micro level. The development of this new concept was necessitated by the complex and bewildering happenings in several parts of the world. The national explosion in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia resulting in the birth of new states; the loss of dominance of the nations of the Atlantic community and the consequent diffusion of international power and influence; and, the emergence of Communism as an alternative to Democracy all challenged the fundamental structure of the discipline of comparative government after the Second World War.¹ Thus arose the need for a new vocabulary in Political Science and the leadership was given by the American political scientists.

The newly born states of Asia and Africa were confronted with the problem of nation building as

their major task. They experienced several difficulties in the process. In other words, the cultural aspects of political development were also to be taken into account. The political culture of a nation is the result of the political socialisation process, it was understood. This made the study of political socialisation important and significant for all people and all societies.

Among the contemporary writers on Political Science it was Graham Wallas who complained that the importance of human nature in politics was not duly understood. The earlier writers on Political Science like Plato, Aristotle, and Machiavelli had their own perceptions of human nature and made them the basis of their enquiry.2

The ultimate result was a trend towards intellectual innovation, an effort to master the new complexities. There was the search for a more comprehensive scope for the study of Comparative Politics. Studies of non-western governments were undertaken and such studies broke new grounds in a theoretical and methodological sense. A search for realism too was visible. An attempt was made to escape from the dominant concern

with law, ideology, and governmental institutions. As a result of the scientific and technological innovations Political Science studies began aiming at precision for which statistical methods were made use of. Finally, the above tendencies strained the theoretical framework and conceptional vocabularies so much so that concepts such as state, and constitution became inadequate. New concepts came to be used such as political culture, political role, political socialisation, etc.

A theoretical understanding of the concept of political socialisation will provide an insight into the socialisation processes of the student youth. The various agencies of political socialisation will enable him to acquire necessary information and skill for political interaction and they will also help to shape his attitudes and orientations regarding politics. The life experiences of a person during his childhood and adolescence are likely to influence his political preferences.

Definition

In the words of Almond and Verba, "political socialisation is the process by which political
cultures are maintained and changed". Rush and Althoff describe it as 'the process' by which an individual becomes acquainted with the political system and which determines his perceptions of politics and his reactions to the political phenomena. Easton and Dennis define it as 'those developing processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour'. As the above definitions make it clear political socialisation is a psychological concept. It concentrates on the way in which the individual acquires political attitudes and orientations and how these help him to respond to particular political situations. A change in the attitudes and orientations of the people will be followed by changes in the society's political culture.

The study of political socialisation seems to be one of the most promising approaches to understanding political stability and development. Almond and Powell says: "Its special significance in the modern world is a consequence of the great changes which are affecting so many contemporary societies. The emergence of the new

nations, the ever expanding network of communications linking old nations and new ones, and the impact of technological innovations on social, economic, and political affairs in even the most stable Western systems, mean that old methods of providing orientation to social action are no longer valid.\textsuperscript{5} There are thus new socialisation structures in the modern society. Also, the people come across new types of experiences in the society. The advancements made in educational standards and the progress made in social and economic fields are closely related to the level of political awareness and feeling of political competence. Social and economic development will lead to increased flow of political information and better standards of education, status, and wealth. Social and economic changes will be followed by attitudinal changes also.

Socialisation is the way culture is transmitted from one generation to another and the individual is fitted into an organised way of life. The human infant born into the world should learn group defined ways of acting and feeling. This process of building group values into the individual is called socialisation.

\textsuperscript{5} Almond and Powell, op. cit., p.65.
Orderliness is a primary requisite of society. There can be no game of social interaction if the players do not observe the rules. The individual must learn every rule; there must be curbs on his desires and appetites. Thus, to become a useful citizen and to enjoy the fruits of social life he must have knowledge about the norms and values of society.  

The social order can be maintained only by giving freedom of expression to the various groups and interests. There must be a social consensus for meaningful action.

A viable political structure will be supported by a political culture. The transmission of political values through the process of political socialisation will enable an individual to participate in the political process. It gives him an understanding of the foundations of the government and also provides him with certain skills. A democratic order needs large numbers of people who are socialised in the skills of political participation and who believe that democratic values are worth having and being protected.  

The outlook displayed by man on political issues are shaped by the whole social amalgam. Politics is deeply involved in the fundamentals of the social order and shares in its characteristics. Politics can thus be viewed as one aspect of man's social activity. It is also true that any aspect of man's social being may acquire political significance. The sociology of politics is the study of the conditions by which men in society can contain conflict within accepted and legitimised processes and arrive at consensus.  

The practical activity of politics too is carried on the fundamental assumption that human nature is always in the process of formation. Politics is centred around the concept of conflict and its resolution in society. But how best this is done depends upon the level of awareness about political issues and participation in the political process. The transmission of values is not smooth always. The members of the society have differing experiences in the course of their societal involvements. This factor leads to distinctive approaches to politics. The political attitudes of a person are conditioned by one's attitude towards other's views also.

7. Ibid., pp.453-84.
Democracy can flourish only under certain conditions. The people must be adequately socialised. Apathy is dangerous to the democratic order. The democratic process attempts to reduce cleavages in society. But there are people who do not adhere to the norms and values of democracy and constitutionalism. Here is the problem of extremism in politics.

Politics is no longer the privilege of the aristocratic class. Industrialisation, bureaucratisation, and nationalism have brought the lower classes into politics. What we witness today is the pluralist society. The pluralist society is the answer to concentration of power according to de Tocqueville. The voluntary organisations also bring together the people to exert pressure upon authorities and as such they may be termed as intermediate political organisations.\(^8\)

Political socialisation is the process by which individuals are inducted into the political culture. It is a learning process and here their orientations towards political objects are formed. The process of political socialisation goes on continuously throughout the life of an individual. Attitudes are established not only during

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8. Ibid., p.464.
infancy but they are always being adapted or reinforced as the individual goes through his social experiences. For example a child may develop a particular attitude towards a political party, but subsequent education and the influence of his friends may alter that early image. Similarly, certain events and experiences may leave their mark on a whole society. A great war or a depression can constitute a severe political trauma for millions of individuals. Again, participation in a mass movement for independence such as freedom movement can provide a learning experience for many people. The participants will acquire new conceptions of the role of politics in their lives and they will strive for new goals.

Political socialisation may take the form of either manifest or latent transmission. It is manifest when it involves the explicit communication of information, values or feelings toward political objects. The Civics course in schools is an example of manifest political socialisation. Latent political socialisation is the transmission of nonpolitical attitudes which affect attitudes toward analogous roles and objects in the political system. For instance, the attitude of an young man towards the political authority will be influenced by his attitude towards other authorities.
like parents, teachers etc. In the words of Almond and Powell, "latent political socialisation involves many of the most fundamental characteristics of the general culture, which may in turn have great effect on the political sphere".  

The process of political socialisation may be homogeneous and continuous or heterogeneous and discontinuous. If it is homogeneous the people will cooperate with each other and there will be an atmosphere of trust in the political culture. The political system will receive a more or less continuous support from society. In other words, the stability of the political system demands an environment where there is a homogeneous process of political socialisation.

If on the other hand, the socialisation process is heterogeneous and discontinuous it is likely to be dangerous to the stability of the political system. It will create dissatisfaction and conflict among the people. Under such conditions even the best political institutions are likely to fail. The failure of the Weimar Republic is often cited in this context. There was dichotomy between the hierarchical authority patterns which pervaded

Germany's non political social institutions and the needs and expectations of the democratic system. Even the attitudes of the people of Germany were at variance with the needs of the democratic system. The people there were brought up in an authoritarian culture for years together.

The process of political socialisation is usually slow. Slow change is preferable to sudden change which will throw the entire system out of gear. Only during a national crisis the process will get speeded up. For example, more and more people will be inducted into the political culture when a national tragedy like the Jalian Walla Bagh occurs.

Political Socialisation and Political Culture

While political socialisation is a psychological concept, political culture is a sociological concept. Political culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among the members of a political system. The political culture of a nation consists of the attitudes and opinions of a people about their political system -- its issues and objects. The attitudes, beliefs, values, and skills which are current in an entire population, as well as those special propensities and patterns which may be found
within separate parts of that population can be called as political culture.\textsuperscript{10} In other words here we refer to the underlying propensities of a political system over a period of time. The study of political culture can be of help in understanding the capacity of a political system to withstand difficult periods.

It is also important to study about the propensities of the various ethnic groups or social classes which make up the population. They may have special propensities or tendencies. These may be called as subcultures. Again, there may be traditions and attitudes current in different roles, structures, and subsystems of the political system. For example, in France, the military officers and bureaucratic officials maintain special cultures.

The attitudes, beliefs and values which men hold are the consequence of political socialisation. It is the socialisation process through which values are inculcated in children, and adults when recruited into roles. Almond and Powell also speak about "cultural secularization". Secularization is "the process whereby men become increasingly rational, analytical and empirical in their political action".\textsuperscript{11} Here traditional attitudes and

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., op. cit., p.23. \\
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p.24.
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orientations give way to more dynamic processes like gathering information, evaluating information, using creative imagination, etc.

Subcultures are broken down either through the impact of new agencies of socialisation, as when schools are introduced into a backward area, or by a change in the operation of the existing agencies of socialisation. But in both these cases the problem of breaking down local subcultures is a long and slow process. It is not easy for a citizen to fully overcome the effects of his latent primary socialisation. It is also difficult to change the functioning of many of the agencies of socialisation like the family. Even in the schools the teachers remain tied to subcultural values. Since no man is thoroughly socialised the process of political socialisation remains imperfect. Individual orientations towards any political object may be viewed in terms of three dimensions including (a) cognitive orientations (knowledge of political objects), (b) affective orientations (feelings of attachment, involvement, etc. of political objects), and (c) evaluative orientations (judgements and opinions about political objects). Thus an individual may have a relatively high degree of accurate knowledge about the way in which the political system works.

12. Ibid., p.71.
This is the cognitive dimension of orientation towards the system. Then again, he may develop feelings of alienation or rejection towards the system. This is called as the affective dimension of the individuals' orientation. Finally, he may have some moral evaluation of the system. Thus an individual may condemn corruption and nepotism.

These three dimensions are interrelated and may be combined in a variety of ways even within the same individual. Thus the conduct of individuals in their political role will be shaped and conditioned by the common orientation patterns. They constitute the latent political tendencies.

Political culture may provide a valuable conceptual tool which bridges the 'micro-macro' gap in political theory. Here the focus of attention is shifted from the individual to the political system.

The objects of political orientation include the political system as a whole, particular political roles or structures, individual or group incumbents of such roles and specific public policies and issues. They also include other political actors and the self as a political actor.
There are three types of political cultures taking into account the distribution of general attitudes towards the political system and the input-output processes. They are parochial, subject, and participant political cultures. In the parochial political culture the people manifest little or no awareness of the national political systems. Subjects are those individuals who are oriented to the political system, but also are not oriented to participation in the input structures. Participants are those 'individuals who are oriented to the input structures and processes and engage in the articulation of demands and the making of decisions. These three types of political culture are only the ideal types. None of them can be found in its pure form. So there are mixed types of political culture. According to Almond and Verba they are (1) the parochial-subject political culture (2) the subject-participant political culture, (3) the parochial-participant political culture, and lastly, (4) the civic culture.

Orientations to politics include the individual's notions of himself as a political actor. Even if an individual has adequate knowledge of the working of the

13. Ibid., p.53.
political system he may still have a range of personal attitudes towards the appropriateness of his personal actions vis-a-vis politics. He may feel competent to influence the political process. There are situations when people feel that they are not able to exert pressure upon the authorities. This may lead to either passive acceptance of the governmental decision or to violent reactions in extreme situations.

It is also important to ascertain the general level of political trust in a society. That is, whether political competitors and opponents are viewed with suspicion or not, and whether or not political interaction and discussion takes place on a relatively free and easy basis. In societies such as Italy and Germany the traumatic experiences of the past half century have made politics a subject to be avoided in personal discussions.\(^{15}\) The sense of confidence in other political actors is an important aspect of a democratic political culture. The British politics depends heavily on patterns of interpersonal trust. There is so much of politics involving customary and not very explicitly defined norms of political interaction.\(^{16}\)

is very important from the viewpoint of political process. The political process should not be looked upon as a life and death struggle, a struggle for supremacy. On the other hand it must be considered as a means of aggregating legitimate needs and demands.

The British and American political systems have in them several formal and informal customs which serve as moderating norms (reducing the harshness of political disagreement) in the entire political process. Such norms are comparatively rare in the political systems of the new nations making it difficult for democracy to flourish there. There are certain fundamental political beliefs in any political system. They may be termed as unstated assumptions and postulates about politics. In this sense they are unchallengeable. If the transitional political cultures are unstable the main reason is that such unchallenged primitive political beliefs are few in them. So what the governments of the developing countries are doing is to create such basic political beliefs. For example, in India basic political beliefs have become the object of direct government concern.\textsuperscript{17} The cultural policies of the government attempt to create new patterns of beliefs.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.521.
Political Socialisation and Opinion Formation

Political socialisation is concerned with communicating attitudes, norms, and knowledge and as such is a basic antecedent of opinion formation. It is an earlier phase of opinion formation. It is here that an individual acquires knowledge, values, and attitudes towards the political system. Following this process he develops political preferences and is inducted into the citizenship role. The end product of political socialisation is thus a set of attributes -- cognitions, value standards, and feelings -- towards the political system.

The crucial period of induction into the political culture is said to be childhood. But in India early adolescence appears to be the more important period. During this period not only the primary socialising agencies but the secondary groups also tend to transmit culture.

Political socialisation being a lifelong experience there are those who emphasise its latent aspects, as there are others who concentrate on its manifest aspects.

19. Ibid., p.172.
Thus psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists stress the latent aspects. They say that people develop their political attitudes unconsciously in the family. But other schools such as the national voluntarists and supporters of the enlightenment and liberalism, emphasise the significance of political and social history as well as formal, educational and propaganda practices in the development of political attitudes and civic norms of nations and peoples. However, the fact is that both aspects of political socialisation are equally important. Emotional learning during childhood and subsequent political indoctrination together help the individual to form attitudes and opinions, either of attachment or of rejection. Political systems in their bid to perpetuate their cultures and structures indoctrinate the young. It may be recalled here that Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Locke had all emphasised the importance of education, both for the rulers and the ruled.

Political socialisation and opinion formation, help an individual to act in various ways in the political process. Political socialisation is the first important input from the environment into the political system. So socialisation can be considered as a necessary

20. Ibid.
precondition for public opinion formation and also for political activities.

Various agents transmit the elements of political socialisation through three mechanisms. They are imitation, instruction and motivation. According to Robert Le Vine these are the mechanisms of political socialisation during childhood. But Rush and Althoff point out that these mechanisms are applicable to the whole socialisation process. Imitation is generally found among children. Adults also imitate but it is mixed up with instruction and motivation. Motivation is most closely identified with experience in general. It is learning appropriate behaviour through a process of trial and error.

The two key variables in political socialisation are -- experience and personality. The politically relevant experience of an individual arises out of the process of political socialisation.

It is important to note here that political socialisation constitutes an important dimension of opinion formation.

21. Ibid., p.175.
22. Ibid.
Political Socialisation and the Democratic System

Democracy presupposes the participation by all in the political process. If the people do not cooperate with the government it will create difficulties. They must pay taxes and also they must be law abiding. It is said that citizens of the newly independent countries do not possess positive orientations towards governmental agencies. They are oriented only to the benefits of governmental outputs. They care little for the laws of the country.23

The governing elites of the newly independent countries are confronted with the problem of nation building. They are the leaders of the new nations and as such they have to usher in changes in their societies. They have discovered that education can play an important role here to shape the attitudes and opinions of people. The people must give up their narrow local loyalties and work together for the progress of the nation. Here arises the problem of national integration. Education can help in integrating the individual aspect and the social aspect of a person, and also enable the people of a country to focus their attention on important national issues.

Education enables a student to understand his civic responsibilities. He learns the value of cooperation. He is initiated into the many sided art of living in a community. Citizens are made, not born. In a democracy the task of education for citizenship is not easy as in a totalitarian society, because here the individual is held above the society. Education for citizenship should therefore be considered "as a lifelong process, that begins in the family, gathers strength in the schools, widens into country level and culminates into world citizenship".24 The education process and the socialisation process find areas of agreement here.

But socialisation is to be distinguished from mere learning. Learning as such may not have any social relevance, whereas socialisation is that part of education which is relevant to social life.25 Moreover, learning is a conscious process. Socialisation takes place unconsciously or automatically.

Education can help in promoting national integration. It has been noticed that the developed countries have been

using the school to train individuals to uphold social values. Emotional integration among a set of people can bring about unity and progress too. The Government of India set up a Committee in 1961 to examine the role of education in promoting national unity.  

Identification with the nation is often one of the basic beliefs that serves to define an individual for himself. By national identity is meant "the beliefs of individuals and the extent to which they consider themselves members of their nation-state". In fact, the question of national identity is the political culture version of self identity. The development of a clear sense of identity helps very much in the formation of a nation, especially its manifest aspect assumes significance in this context.

Political socialisation is all the more significant considering the trend towards modernisation of all societies. The modern society is called the mass society -- large, complex, industrial, urbanised and bureaucratised. As such it is different from the old folk and feudal societies. Industrialisation has uprooted

and unattached man in a large and impersonal society. In other words, social norms and values have changed. These new norms and values which are created in the process of modernisation have to be internalised by the people. The mass media has become the greatest competitor with the school in the field of transmission of values today.

Agents of Political Socialisation

Political socialisation is effected through a variety of agents. The most important among them are the family, peer groups, educational institutions, secondary groups, the mass media, government, and party agencies.28

1. The family

Among these the family is the most important. The child learns to respect authority first at home. This attitude formation is likely to influence its behaviour in later years also. Similarly, the children are likely to be influenced by their parents' political preferences. The opportunity provided to them to participate in the decision making processes at home will make them politically competent in the future. They are likely to play an active role in politics. In the family the

child obeys rules and regulations. This would help the child to live as a law abiding citizen when he grows up.

There are several reasons for assigning a vital role to the family in the process of political socialisation. Firstly, the family holds a crucial position in the life of a child. It is the only agency for a fairly long period which meets its physical and emotional needs. The child needs family's love and approval. Secondly, the children have a natural tendency to imitate their parents. The ideal role model for the daughter is her mother and for the son his father. Thirdly, the members of a family live in the same environment and the family members are influenced by the same neighbours and same friends. This will tend to create uniformity of opinion among the family members. Thus children will share parent's opinions in most cases.

But the political socialisation operating at the family level is likely to be very much conservative in character. All families tend to preserve and perpetuate traditional practices and ideas. So what happens in reality is that while developing societies aim at dramatic changes, families resist sudden changes.

29. Ibid., p.112.
2. The peer group

Besides the family there are other groups in society which are based upon primary relationship, yet differing from family in structure and character. Childhood play groups, friendship cliques, small work groups, brothers and sisters, married couples are some of the examples of these groups. They are known as peer groups. Even though there is intimate relationship in the family among its members, it is characterised by hierarchy. The parent-child relationship is always hierarchical and each family contains at least two separate generations. Thus all of them do not enjoy the same status. But peer groups are formed by equals and the relationship is not therefore hierarchical. Peer groups may have leaders, but they do not have well defined and rigid roles.

As the child reaches adolescence the political socialisation process will assume new dimensions. Then emerges the problem of interpretation of and adjustment to political changes. The family influence will diminish and the peer group will become the guiding agency for the adolescent. It is also true to say that peer groups supplement the socialising functions of the family by preparing the individual for more specific political experiences. Such supplementation is necessary in the modern context
because parents are not able to prepare their children successfully for full social and political status, and participation in the complex social and political structures. Moreover, a peer group does not always work in conflict with the family. It may work as a political reinforcer of familial ideas.

There are certain reasons for the success of peer groups. Firstly, there is easy flow of interaction among its members, and also there is the emotion-laden personalised relations. The members of the peer group enjoy free access and exposure to each other. Secondly, the relationship is highly intimate which makes the task of socialisation very easy. But it must be borne in mind that politics need not come up for discussion among the members of the peer group always.

Since orientations to other political actors constitute an important area of political culture, the ways in which peer group contacts affect these orientations has a bearing on future political behaviour. The peer group relationships may build or breakdown attitudes of hostility and aggression. The individual members of the group may develop skills in human interaction. They will also get training in group decision making.
While examining the group basis of politics Earl Latham begins with the statement that "the chief social values cherished by individuals in modern society are realized through groups." The obvious examples of this are the trade unions, professional organisations, community voluntary associations or recreational groups. But even more importantly, the values which are cherished by the individual are rooted in the group's values. Herbert McClosky and Harold E. Dahlgren assert: "The belief that people who associate together come to think alike is now so thoroughly buttressed by research and daily observation that it has become a common place." So it follows that the group helps the individual to get what he wants and also defines what the individual will want.

An individual gets information very often from the group. This is the meaning of group conformity, conforming to the norms of the group. If the group is small the pressure to conform will be strong.

The political behaviour of man is a complex affair. The individual has been modified in the course of his


31. Ibid.
development in such a way that he is likely to exhibit
certain persistent pattern of behaviour apart from the
transient stimulation in his contemporary environment.
This is the result of the socialisation of the individual
as a child and the experiences derived from precursive
forms of politics, politics being the prerogative of
adults. During the adolescent age socialisation process
mainly includes those experiences which are the precursors
of politics. It is the totality of a child's experiences
that is responsible for adult patterns.

From the studies conducted in the European countries
and America it has been concluded that while boys read
general literature and history, girls read fiction.
Similarly, while boys prefer historical figures, girls
pick up teachers or their acquaintances as their models.
It follows then that at an early age boys are
directed towards politics. Boys have exhibited their
superiority over girls too, regarding knowledge of
the political phenomena.

Researches conducted into the nature of 'political
man' has resulted in the discovery of the fact political
life starts at a very early stage, even before the high
school or the college. This is especially so in a
democracy where many people must be trained for
participation and responsibility. The citizens must be loyal to the state and must support democratic values. When we study the development of political consciousness in the child we see that the child adopts its parent's opinions as a starting point. David Easton and Robert D. Hess make this point clear when they say that the attitude of the American child towards the political community is a positive sense of trust and support. They say: "The sentiments of most children with respect to their political community are uniformly warm and positive throughout all grades, with scarcely a hint of criticism or note of dissatisfaction".32 Similarly Greenstein's study of 659 preadolescent school children in New Haven reveals that their attitude towards authority is positive, supportive, and uncritical. They adopt such an attitude not on the basis of valid information but on purely emotional basis.33

But later on as the child grows up to maturity he learns other opinions which counterbalance the earlier blind faith and trust in authority. Children talk to more people outside their immediate family and the result is that they develop group affiliations. The various


33. Ibid., p.19.
groups like religious, ethnic, socio-economic classes and political parties may have conflicting political beliefs. Identification with socio-economic classes and political parties forms the basic touchstones for political partisanship. Research on youthful political beliefs indicates that children learn to identify with political parties at a very early age. For example, Easton and Hess say that many of the grammar school students, if they had voting rights would have identified with one of the two major political parties of America. Again, Hyman says, "The adult (political) pattern that seems established in most complete form in earlier life is that of party affiliation".

So the formation of group affiliations as the child grows up into maturity is an important stage in the development of the adolescent. His friends need not hold the same opinions as his parents. The values may conflict with parental values. The 'peer group' thus becomes a potent source of influence for those who are looking for an alternative to family norms and opinions. The peer group is a part of the school community. The general educational process helps an individual to get an informational basis and this also makes

34. Ibid., p.20.

35. Ibid.
deviance possible as far as attitudes and opinions of the adolescent is concerned. Studies conducted among Illinois high school students have revealed that those students who deviated from their parents' political affiliations most often shifted towards the political climate of their peers. 36 Moreover for some attitudes and opinions peer groups may exercise more influence than the family. It has also been proved by the Kenneth P. Langton sample of Jamaican secondary school students that teenage peer groups transmit adult values rather than teenage values only. 37

Enough research has been done in the developed countries to show that small groups have a powerful persuasion effect. For example, Sherif has shown that in situations of ambiguous perception people quickly pick up a group standard and make it their own. Again, Bovard has shown that the statement of a leader is often less influential than the group opinion in changing member's opinions. 38 It has above all been proved that small groups have been demonstrably influential in determining political opinion of its members.

37. Ibid., p.362.
38. For a detailed discussion of Group Influence, See Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, op. cit., pp.33-42.
3. The School

This is another important agency of political socialisation. The educational institution is an excellent medium through which values can be imparted to young men and women. Therefore modern governments have taken the initiative to start schools and colleges.

Schools socialise the individuals both directly and indirectly. Direct socialisation takes place when the school curriculum teaches nationalistic values. The students come to know about country's heroes and traditions. They develop a sense of pride about and a feeling of loyalty to their country. In addition latent political socialisation too takes place at the school level. That is, their general awareness grows and they make inferences. The modes of participation in different matters in the school will also determine students' orientation towards political participation. They will grasp the unwritten 'rules of the political game' as in Britain where the traditional public schools inculcate the values of public duty, informal political relations, and political rectitude. Thus the school experience reinforces affection for the political system and creates awareness of values and circumstances providing a basis for new political aspirations.

Again, the school contains a particular pattern of authoritative decision making (as in the family) to which all students are exposed. Students might get an opportunity to participate in the decision making process. Myron Weiner, while discussing the problem of socialisation of university students in India says that there is a breakdown in communications between university or college authority and students. The demands of the students are usually negotiable and manageable, but the universities lack proper procedures for it. Therefore students look upon politics simply as a means to protest, and public policy as the edicts of a nonresponsive government.40

4. Secondary Groups

Besides primary groups like the family and peer groups (where there is face to face relationship) there are secondary groups also which are engaged in the process of political socialisation. In a highly developed society where the relationship is complex one can find a large number of secondary groups which play an important role in the socialisation process. The membership of a secondary group provides a very good apprenticeship for dealing with relationships in the political world. The skill and

40. Ibid., p.68.
information which a person receives during his participation in a secondary group will be useful later on in the political context. It is possible to recognise three types of secondary groups which are engaged in political socialisation in different ways. Firstly, there are secondary groups with a distinctly political character. Examples are political parties and political youth groups. They disseminate political values, mobilise political leaders. Thus they carry on intentional manifest political socialisation. Secondly, there are groups constituted for non political purposes but which carry on political education. For example, labour unions. A labour union is formed for the purpose of collective bargaining, but it also tries to involve its members in political action. Thirdly, there are secondary groups which do not have any political character and which do not give any political education to its members. Thus a cricket club is not directly an agent of political socialisation. But here one can witness a process of unintentional latent political socialisation.

Experiences during employment may also shape political orientations. There are unions, social

clubs, etc. in the place where one works. These are also channels of political communication. Thus participation in a strike or a demonstration can be a powerful socialising experience.

5. Mass Media

The role of the mass media cannot be overlooked in the process of political socialisation. The media provide the people with information. The TV, the radio, and the newspapers not only report the news, but also interpret them. While doing so certain points will be emphasised and certain others will be rejected. Controlled system of mass media can be a powerful force in shaping political beliefs. However, it must be borne in mind that the mass media are not the actual originators of the messages. The messages originate at the level of government officials or political leaders. Thus it would be more apt to say that the mass media are not the primary socialiser, they only reinforce the already established orientations. But in a country like India the influence of the mass media is limited. Newspapers and TV are not within the reach of our rural populations. As a result the political parties organise rallies and demonstrations to highlight their points of view.
6. Political Parties

The political parties help the people to come into contact with the political process. The parties may either reinforce the established political culture or may bring about significant changes in the pattern of the existing political culture. When a nation is trying to implement radical policies the political parties can serve as useful agencies for disseminating such progressive ideas.

A political party can very well affect the cognitive dimension of political culture. Through a local party organisation an unemployed person may learn the procedure for applying for unemployment allowance. The parties not only stimulate awareness, but may also present a specific ideology with goals for the future. Finally, parties may also engage in harnessing charisma as a foundation of stable authority. An individual possessing extraordinary qualities can transform social behaviour and attitudes. The parties can also shape the affective and evaluative orientations of the people. Participation in political activities can increase the sense of loyalty between elites and followers -- affective dimension. Again, parties can supply both goals and criteria, and this enables people to pass judgements upon political issues.
There are two kinds of political socialisation performed by political parties. They are first, the reinforcement of the existing political culture and second, the initiation of change in the existing political culture. The reinforcement of the existing political culture may be either functional or dysfunctional for the political system. To illustrate by example, the French political parties reinforce the fragmented political culture of France. The party activities reinforce diverging political attitudes which sustain the fragmented political culture. This is also true of countries where strong traditional and ethnic subcultures are supported by political parties. On the other hand, in countries like United States the two party structure cuts across regional and class differences. Here both parties recognise long established traditions and symbols and thus there is an underlying national agreement regarding the rules of the political game.

There are situations when political parties initiate new patterns of political culture. Thus the fascists and communists with the help of monolithic party organisations provided political coherence and direction for millions of people in a time of distress and social disintegration. So it follows that when socio-economic conditions are in a state of flux parties which can offer political solutions
(discontinuous with long standing cultural patterns) are favoured by the people. The political elites could introduce new norms of political behaviour because of the failure of historical pattern of thinking. In this context the role of political parties in socialisation assumes much significance as far as the developing countries are concerned. These transitional societies witness radical changes in the social, economic, and political fields.

The political parties can provide a sense of security to a people who are faced with difficulties arising from the breakup of a traditional society. The symbol and leader of a party can bring about a coherence and order among such a people and thus satisfy their emotional needs.

The effectiveness with which political parties engage in political socialisation depends upon several factors. The internal characteristics of the party, the solidarity of party leaders, and the conditions of social and political environment must be considered.

7. Government

A proper description of the various agencies of political socialisation will not be complete without a
mention of the government as a socialising agency. In a modern society an individual comes in touch with the government almost everyday. He has got direct knowledge of what the government stands for. He possesses an idea about the governmental functions and he comes into contact with the government officials. Sometimes the government directly intervenes to carry on a process of political indoctrination. But this is an indication of the lack of political stability in that society. It also points towards the failure of the other agencies of political socialisation.

It must be emphasised here that the various agencies of political socialisation shall complement each other in order to ensure the stability of the political system. However, this does not mean that the process of political socialisation will be perfectly homogeneous. Some amount of disharmony among the functions of the various agencies is only natural. This is because political socialisation is a continuous process and hence cannot be expected to be static.

42. Ibid., p.118.