CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Many research projects undertaken in the area of mental health during the last three decades aim at the development of personality change programmes. As a result, a number of short term programmes are now available to deal with deviant children in the areas of general clinical set up, remedial education and institutional rehabilitation. These programmes have been extended to the general population in the fields of community psychology and human resources development.

The objectives of personality change programmes are multifold: such as, prevention of maladaptive behavior; enhancement of effective performance of an individual in different situations; improving social competence, helping people gain social acceptance and so on. These are also the objectives of socialization, hence, these programmes may be viewed as part of socializing process.
1.2. The concept of Socialization is briefly examined here in terms of definitions and theories.

Mead (1946; 1964) and her co-workers attempted to explain socialization in terms of communication and information theory. They view child rearing as a process of communicating culture to the child through encoded messages in behavior - both implicit and explicit.

The psycho-analytical behaviorism of Miller and Dollard (1941) and the works of Whiting and Child (1953) have had a great influence on research in socialization. These writers focus on how the gratification of primary needs in early childhood leads to the acquisition of socially valued habits. Brim (1966) and Parsons and Shils (1951) extended these views to role training. They consider socialization as a process by which persons acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions that
make them useful members of the society. It is also the process through which individuals learn the modes of organized, reciprocal and socially regulated interactions with others as prescribed for different roles. Levine (1969) suggests that the form of positive and negative sanctions for learning in the social cultural system are translated by parents into rewards and punishments or encouragements and discouragements for childhood behavior that are of relevance to adult role performance. The theory of social learning proposed by Bandura and Walters (1963) also reflects this view.

1.3. The effectiveness of socialization is reflected in the extent of knowledge regarding social expectations and values, social and interpersonal skills, competence in role performance and in competence expressed with regard to channelization of systems of behavior that are being socialized. Cultural and social class differences found in the above aspects are linked with the variations in the goals of socialization and in the procedures employed (Raz, M.S., 1976). Many of the studies related to the effects of socialization focus on certain inter-related issues, like, the
measures of attachment and sociability (eg. Ainsworth, M.D., 1963; and Maccoby, E.E., and Masters, J.C., 1970); Competence (Baumrind, D., 1972); Aggression (Hartup, W.W., 1976); Moral development (Kohlberg, L., 1969); Social acceptance, anxiety and emotional disturbance (McCandles, et. al., 1956; Fenichel, C., 1976); and Anti-social behavior (Redl, F., 1966). However, the focus of this study is on Social acceptance as an outcome of socialization.

Social acceptance refers to a point on the "Acceptance-Rejection" continuum, which a member occupies by virtue of his associates' evaluation of him (Thompson, G.G., 1969). The notion of associates includes peers, members of the family, neighbourhood, etc. The degree of acceptance a member enjoys is made explicit to him by other members of his group in terms of their feelings, attitudes and such other aspects of behavior. Acceptance and rejection are essentially a matter of degree and vary from situation to situation. This may be ascertained by the frequency of expressions of choice, agreement, approval and expressed affection in different situations.
1.4. The importance of social acceptance by parents during infancy and early childhood need be hardly emphasised. During infancy the care and warmth a child receives from other members of the family is an indicator of a child being accepted. Various studies show how the degree of acceptance enjoyed during infancy influences later development of personality.

Parental rejection and lack of expressed acceptance felt early in life are considered to be the antecedents of many behavioural problems among children as indicated in the studies with autistic children (Fenichel, C., 1976; Goldfarb, W., 1945), delinquents (Power, et al., 1974; Rutter, M., 1972) and truant children (Hersov, L.A., 1960). These negative effects on personality growth may be off-set by a compensating favourable environment. As pre-adolescence is a crucial stage involving significant developmental tasks, this study is focussed on children in the age range of 9 to 13 years. During these years, social acceptance from people outside the family, especially peers, has a greater influence on the child's adjustment and well-being. With the reper- tory of response modalities the children have
acquired by now, they are curious to enter into the adult world.

Piaget (1963) has identified a changing phase in the cognitive process from concrete operations to formal operations during preadolescence. Psychoanalysts consider this phase as the latency period. In Erikson's theory the behavioral tendencies are consolidated at this stage to move towards Identity or Identity diffusion, after passing through the psychosocial crisis of Industry Vs. Inferiority (Erikson, E.H., 1950).

Baldwin (1957) reports four major developmental changes during this period. They are: acquisition of culturally valued skills and roles; learning about people and their viewpoints; structuring of super-ego; and sex role identification.

The developmental tasks listed by Blair and Burton (1951) highlight the importance of social and cognitive skills to be acquired at this stage. The important aspects of these developmental tasks include:— (1) achieving an appropriate 'dependence-independence' pattern; (2) 'giving-receiving' pattern of affection in forming friendship with peers; (3) relating to changing
social groups; (4) acquiring moral values; and (5) learning to identify with the social contemporaries of the same sex having in view the psychosocial and psycho-biological sex roles involved.

Many authors emphasize the importance of social acceptance from people outside the family in personality growth during preadolescence. Blair and Burton (1951) assert that many disorders of this stage are associated with failure of children to be accepted by childhood gang. Highlighting the same point, Hurlock (1968) suggests that lack of social acceptance cuts off the child from social contacts at a crucial time when such contacts are of vital importance for the child in learning to make satisfactory adjustment to other children. Kundu and Maite (1978) considered social isolation at this stage of development as a predictor of later adjustment or neurotic behaviour. Children with poor peer relations had more adjustmental problems compared to others and showed greater incidence of social mal-adjustment (Gronlund, N.E., and Anderson, L., 1957) and delinquency (Roff, M., Sells, B., and Golden, M., 1972).

The incidence of social isolation prevails in alarming proportion among preadolescents. Observations
by many investigators (Gronlund, N.E., 1959; Oden, S., and Asher, S.R., 1977) reveal that nearly 12 per cent of them go through school with very few or no friends at all. Lack of social acceptance, as viewed by Bigelow (1977), results from failure to recognize the friendship expectancies and inability to learn the skills of performing behavior relevant to these expectancies. As a result, there may be a deleterious effect on their self-esteem and subsequent adult relationship (Duck, et al., 1980).

Social isolation may also result from initial deficit in social skills. This deficit seriously limits the quality and extent of peer interaction experience and thereby further impedes the development of appropriate positive social skills. Several studies have indicated that unpopular children are deficient in a variety of social skills such as initiating play, cooperating, communicating needs and emotion accurately and responding to peers with appropriate affection, approval or help (Gottman, et al., 1975; Hartup, et al., 1967). As a result of such ineffective social contacts others may ignore or actively reject the child. These negative social experiences further encourage maladaptive responses such as - withdrawal from social
interaction, hostile and annoying vocalization, retaliation, physical aggression and the like which make the child less popular.

1.5. The above findings stress the need to develop programmes which result in lasting gains in peer acceptance of isolate children. Hartup (1976) was of the opinion that adequate opportunity for peer interaction provides the child with practice and feedback required to develop social skills necessary for better social relations. Behavior therapists have also acknowledged the importance of peer group influence. Peer acceptance has been used as a reinforcer in behavior modification techniques. Prosocial behavior among target children improved with the use of techniques like Peer Modeling (Sanok, R.L., and Ascione, F.R., 1980), Peer-Counselling and participation in peer group discussion (Farrelly and Lantz, 1980). Peer interactions of isolated children was increased by teaching them to give reinforcements to others ( Kirby, F.D., and Toler, H.C., 1970; Crowder, J., 1975). Peer groups and peer interactions are thus important agents in behavior change programmes.
Even in the normal course of development peer groups of neighbourhood, school, street-corner and the groups which extend beyond those specified localities tend to play a significant role in the various spheres of child's activities.

Peer group provides opportunities to learn social behaviors such as interacting with age mates, dealing with hostility and dominance, relating to leaders and leading others. The peer groups help preadolescents to develop realistic self-concept, identify one's sex-role and know what career to take up and what likes and interests to develop. A child's desire to be an accepted member of the peer group determines his aspiration and career choice (Wilson, A.B., 1959), attitude towards school and behavior in school and scholastic performance (Coleman, J.S., 1961). It is also observed by Bronfenbrenner (1970) that children from non-nurturant homes adopt the values of peer groups eagerly if they are accepted by the group and children who lack adequate parental model will be more strongly motivated to adopt attitudes and behavior of peer group leaders, compared to children from a favourable family background.
McCandles (1969), who made a survey of literature on the role of peer groups in socialization, suggests acceptance by peers as indicated by sociometric status and friendship choice to be the best indicator of a child's personal social adjustment. Thus, peer group is an effective media of socialization and the process is incomplete when the child is isolated from the group.

1.6. Apart from family and peer group, the formal educational influence operating mainly through school is also significant for growth during preadolescence. The influence of education on socialization of the child has been extensively dealt with by educational sociologists and educational philosophers, besides the various Commissions on education. However, a brief overview of the topic is given here.

Educational system has two fold functions as recognised by ancient Indians (cited in Rao, S.K.R., 1974) to make provision for learning for livelihood and learning for perfection or supreme knowledge. Another dichotomy was introduced in the aim of education by Sri Aurobindo in his conception of 'Collective' and 'Individual' aspects of education (cited in Pavitra, 1976). To Durkheim, E., (1956) one objective of education was to
prepare the child for adult role by equipping him with specialized technical and scientific training.

In the context of the expanding role of schools in the process of socialization, Rhule (1971) visualized their increased responsibility in promoting intellectual growth and mental health of pupils. According to him schools will eventually concern itself more with educating emotions and will fit to the students rather than fitting students to the schools. These may take the form of a combined or integrated institutional mental health facility to cope with learning difficulties of different kinds and to deal with disturbed and delinquent students.

However, the primary objective of schools, namely, fostering intellectual growth remains yet unfulfilled. Schools have failed to attract those children who refuse to learn for various reasons. Learning situations provided in the school are based on the presumption of normal development. Hence, children who are not successfully socialized in the earlier stage and who suffer from social disadvantages or emotional disturbances find it difficult to cope with school life.
Educationists in India have also felt a serious lacunae in the prevailing system of education. The Kothari Commission report (Ministry of Education, 1966) stress the need to cultivate a sense of moral and social responsibility in the 'raising generation'. Appropriate plan and direction are found to be lacking in the area of cognitive development (Mathur, V.S., 1976; Gopalakrishnaiah, V., 1976). These aspects are echoed in the New Education Policy and strategies for development are currently being worked out by the Department of Human Resources Development of the Government of India.

Of late, a few changes have been introduced in the curriculum of schools, like - exposing the students to the sciences of human relations and behavior early in the school system (Kraemer, M.V., 1974); introducing family life education in the regular school programmes (Jayasuria, J.E., 1972); teaching the meaningful operation of justice in the moral education courses (Kohlberg, 1970), etc. Some of the earlier social disadvantages in families are compensated in the programmes for pre-primary education and remedial education. The participation in education by research organizations
and voluntary bodies dedicated to social service is on the increase. They offer programmes for participation of children in community living, leadership training, self awareness and self directed discipline. The multifaceted programmes for teachers and students of a few selected educational institutions in developing countries offered by the UNESCO clubs also foster growth in cognitive and social spheres. However, the benefit of these programmes are available to a limited number of children and a systematic evaluation of the success of these programmes is yet to be undertaken.

1.7. This study focuses on socialization through small group interaction. The effectiveness of socialization is determined by the interaction and experiences to which children are exposed in small groups within the family, school or neighbourhood.

The social values of small group interaction are many. These groups help to accomplish many of educational objectives and serve to imprint most of the cultural values. The various types of groups such as friendship groups, play groups, hobby and work groups, groups for convenience and protection, provide opportunity to learn new skills and become a source of
recognition, support and encouragement (Reeves, E.T., 1970).

These groups act as a miniature structure of a larger group into which the child is being socialized. The interactions within the group will have a significant impact on how individual group members feel, think and act both individually and collectively (Nixon, H.L., 1979).

The group interactions provide for the expression and gratification of many social and ego needs. Schutz (1958) has theorized that one joins the groups because of three interpersonal needs, namely, inclusion, control and affection. We have needs both to give and receive these interpersonal needs.

Studies reviewed by Shaw (1976) suggest that a member is influenced by the mere presence of others, tends to give judgments in conformity with his group, shows improvement in the quality of problem solving, and learns better in group situations. Smaller groups are more favourable for participation and communication. A smaller size of the class creates better social climate for learning as larger classes increase
diversity and formality. Children are found to be more creative in small groups. More intense and cohesive interaction was demonstrated among preadolescents in 5 member than in 12 member discussion teams and members of smaller groups felt their opinions were more important. Children enrolled in class rooms using small study groups were more cooperative compared to children who received instructions in larger classes.

In studying groups we are not dealing with a collection of different pieces of behavior happening in juxtaposition but with a complex and dynamic interaction. As Thompson and Kahn (1970) observe, there is mutual recognition among members and each communicates something to the other and responds to the communication of others thus forming a pattern of interactions. Small group interaction is recognized by Tubbs (1978) as the process by which three or more members of a group exchange verbal and non-verbal messages in an attempt to influence one another. However, the present study does not make an attempt to analyse the group processes and group dynamics, but treats group as a media or a context in which planned intervention operates.
Preadolescence is recognized as a phase of coordinated group activity. Blair and Burton (1951) observe that preadolescent shows a genuine interest in group activity and deep loyalty to a group that is small. Redl (1966) considers group work as the only means through which the motivational problems of preadolescent is actually discovered. Various techniques are available to guide and direct the interactions in small groups like the activity groups, skills training groups, social problem solving groups, transactional analysis groups, therapy groups, personal counselling groups, T-groups and encounter groups. What is needed in the present social context is an objective evaluation of the outcome of these procedures with regard to cognitive and social-personal growth, and a comparison of the merit of these programmes in the specific context in which they are effective in bringing about a desired change. The ethical issues involved in decisions pertaining to the manipulation of desirable or undesirable characteristics have not acquired a serious dimension yet.

To sum up: Appropriate socialization results in acquisition of behavior leading to social acceptance. The process of socialization is a process of learning
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To sum up: Appropriate socialization results in acquisition of behavior leading to social acceptance. The process of socialization is a process of learning.
and the process is more successful with the use of reinforcements and in an environment of warmth and acceptance. Social acceptance is highly indispensible for preadolescents and enhancing peer group interactions help them to develop skills for better social relations. Promoting this aspect of growth is a part of the responsibility of schools and small group interaction may be an effective media in reducing social rejection and isolation.

1.8. The present study is aimed at developing intervention programmes for enhancing social acceptance of preadolescents in small groups. In developing these intervention programmes, the limited resources of the existing school set up in the country are kept in view and an attempt is made to make these procedures simple and easily applicable by involving minimally trained personnel.

This study also aims to cover other objectives such as:

1. comparing the effectiveness of these programmes based on different theoretical approaches in enhancing social acceptance;
2. assessing the validity of the study by considering the change in factors related to social acceptance; and

3. investigating group differences. The significance of social class differences or sex typing in a given culture can not be neglected while developing programmes for improving social acceptance. This is true of factors like developmental status and the sociometric status of children. Hence, study also made an attempt to investigate these group differences in the outcome of planned small group interactions.