UNIT 2: CHILDHOOD (PART-II)

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1   LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to -

- discuss the role of school in socialization process of children
- describe the importance of healthy relationship with teachers
- discuss the nature of peer preferences and friendship and their importance in socialization process
- highlight the effect of poverty in childhood and
- discuss the role of family and school in child abuse.

2.2   INTRODUCTION

This is the second part of the unit childhood. In the first part (unit 1) you have learned concept of childhood, concept of socialization, role of family in socialization process of children, effect of child rearing practices and so on. In this unit we shall discuss in brief role of school, peers and friends in socialization process of a child. How the child selects friends is an important aspect of study. You will learn the interesting developmental shifts in various stages. We shall also touch upon the effect of poverty in childhood and discuss the role of family and school in child abuse.

2.3 SCHOOLING AS A CONTEXT OF SOCIALIZATION

A child's upbringing not only depends on family socialization (as you have learned in unit 1) but also equally as a result of formal schooling and social institution s/he is attached. The child as a student at elementary school may be actively involved in some activities and learn disciplines that help him/her in his/her future perception, development and decisions. These activities may include anything starting from prayer in the morning standing in a queue in front of the school or classrooms, taking part in group activities in the class, drawing, painting, doll making or playing in the school playground.

In secondary school system, the child goes through a structured atmosphere. There are people to maintain discipline and proper functioning in the school environment. Besides the school authority, managers, teachers, there are other structures like, class captain, head boy or head girl, etc. These forms of authority groups within the school system are specifically designed so that they reflect the various positions in our society. Formal schooling provides the background for children to capture the norms, values, beliefs prevail in the society.

2.3.1 Relationship with Teachers

Relationship with teachers is very important. Generally, motivation declines during the elementary school years, but many students stay motivated (Pressley & McCormick, 2007).

Researchers have observed that the students were more motivated when they perceived that their teachers were supportive and friendly. When the students see that their teachers are warm and supportive, they are also likely to perceive that their efforts will pay off.

Teacher's expectation from the students is important. Extremely engaging teachers left their students know that they can do what is asked of them and then support students appropriately so that success is likely. Engage teachers flood their classroom

with motivating instructions, do something to motivate the students constantly (Pressley & McCormick, 2007).

Motivation must be a part of your daily classroom teaching. In your session plan, you must include steps for providing motivation to the students or regular basis and also gauge the effect of motivation by observing their behaviour and providing a situation say for example 'test'.

ACTIVITY 2.1

List the activities you have done as a student in your school which you think helped you to learn discipline.

Collect information from fellow participants about the activities they were involved during their school days.

List some innovative activities which will be suitable for your students keeping the advancement of technologies now-a-days.

2.3.2 Peer Preferences

In this section we shall discuss the preferences in peers and friendship changes with the increase of age.

Generally, a preference for same-sex peers is evident by the end of the preschool period. You may have observed that children below 18 months generally do not show any sex preferences. Around 27 months, children begin to show preference in same sex and this preference increases with age. Girls share with girls a preference for certain toys, engage in relatively less rough play and more responsive than boys to the requests and verbal prohibitions of other girls. Such compatibility may arise from socialization and/or biological sex differences (Libert et al., 1986). Again, around 10-12 years children start showing preferences to opposite sex.

2.3.3 Friendship

This is a natural tendency of human beings to search friends with whom they can share thoughts, feelings, and the meaning of

their lives. Friendship may be defined as close and lasting relationships between two people.

Friendship with peers can occur as early as first year of life. Social recognition is observed even in six months old infant. You may have observed that six months old infant smiles while seeing another infant smiling, she touches her, and responds to her voice.

During preschool years, children begin to share toys and copy each other's motor actions and also interact verbally. However, the friendship begins to become more stable during elementary school period. The child in elementary school say that another child is their friend because they study in the same class, or because they share food, toys etc.

During childhood friendship helps to develop intimacy and self-disclosure. According to Chelune (1979) self-disclosure is a process of communicating personal information about oneself to someone else. You must agree that we like to tell someone put own thoughts and feelings if s/he tells us about his/her thoughts. Cohn and Strassberg (1983) reported that children do reciprocate when intimate disclosures are offered by other children.

Developmental shifts in dealing with friends

Researchers have observed an interesting developmental shift between childhood and adolescence stage in the way the children deal with friends. It has been observed that up to about fourth grade, children do not show more interest to share their thoughts and feelings with the friends. When the children reach around eighth grade, they show more interest to share their thoughts with the friends. They are more likely to define their friendships in terms of loyalty and trust as well as shared desires (e.g., both like to play chess, eat ice-cream, and so on).

During adolescence friendship gets a special importance. You must have observed that adolescent boys and girls go on talking to their friend hours after hours. They feel very happy to talking to others. Researchers felt that the adolescents are more capable than

young children to understand the feelings, thoughts of their friends. Researchers also felt that the adolescents have strong need for intimacy in friendship. This is the time when they break away from the strong ties to home and parents that was special in childhood. Adolescents are much more likely than children to share their intimate feelings to friends (Berndt, 1982). Furthermore, sex differences in close friendships become more pronounced during adolescence. Girls are more likely to have very intimate relationships than boys, and they are more likely than boys to have one exclusive *best friend*.

In school children's friendship often shows clear status hierarchies. Higher status families have greater access to resources such as games, toys, books, internet, and so on. Higher status children tend to be friend those of a higher status, while low status children likely to have friends of lower status (Feldman, 2010).

ACTIVITY 2.2

You may study the attitude and preferences of the children in your class, and note the reasons for selecting friends by the children.

Developmental psychologists and researchers have reported that friendship change qualitatively with age, being based on (i) enjoyment of common activities in early childhood, (ii) mutual loyalty and caring in late childhood, and (iii) intimacy and self-disclosure (Collins & Madsen, 2006).

Hamm (2000) observed that most high school students choose friends of the same ethnic background. On the other hand, adolescents choose friends whose psychological qualities like interests, attitudes, values and personalities match their own.

2.4 POVERTY AND CHILDHOOD

In this section, we will shift our attention to an important issue i.e. poverty in childhood. Children living in poverty (are those who) experience

deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society. According to UNICEF, this definition suggests that the poverty children experience with their hands minds and hearts in interrelated (UNICEF, 2005).

It is observed that many children coming from poor families lack in proper nourishment. Poverty in a family influences the quality of home life which in turn influences children's education. When parents remain anxious, frustrated and depressed due to low income, they do not get enough scope to talk to their children and guide them proper way. The children do not perform well as their intelligence affects due to malnourishment and often drop out from the schools.

Children coming from rich family get more help in all round development. The parents of high socioeconomic families emphasize self-direction, and self control. Their expectations from the children are high. They communicate their expectations through interaction with the children and encourage to achieve the goal.

Some parents in poor families may have aspirations from their children, but cannot afford to send a high standard school. If you get a group of students from poor family and another group from rich family in your class, how do you treat those students? Do you think individual support needs to be provided to the students? You must prepare a systematic session plan so that need of all the students can be fulfilled without any bias.

Wordsworth, McPeak & Feeny (2005) reported that children experiences poverty in three interrelated domains: (i) **deprivation** due to lack of essential material conditions and services; (ii) **exclusion** on the basis of age, gender, class, caste etc; and (iii) **vulnerability** with regard to the changing array to threats in their environments.

2.5   ROLE OF FAMILY AND SCHOOL IN CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse

The family is supposed to care for and socialize the children.

Sometimes this does not happen. Children are neglected physically and psychologically and they are abused that means they are physically harmed. They are slapped, hit with something, kicked, beat up, and threatened and so on. Sometimes confrontation occurs at home. The cause for confrontation may be liking for boy child and disliking for girl child. Poverty may be another reason. In many cases alcoholic parents abuse their children. You may have observed this sometimes in your life. You may have also observed that a particular child is always abused in a family. Other children do not become victim of abuse. Some children may be less intelligent in comparison to children of their age living in the neighbourhood. They may whine or cry a lot and may be victim of abuse. Large family size, low income, low educational levels and unemployment may be the reasons for children's abuse at home. Social isolation and marital conflict are often related to abuse (Friedman et al., 1981).

Preventative measures should be taken to stop abuse at home. Parents must be educated, trained, provide mental support and counseling to stop child abuse. The teachers mainly the school counsellors must play an important role to help family members to care for and socialize their children properly.

2.6   LET US SUM UP

- A child's upbringing not only depends on family socialization but also equally as a result of formal schooling and social institution she is attached.

- Researchers have observed that the students were more motivated when they perceived that their teachers were supportive and friendly. Motivation must be a part of daily classroom teaching

- Peer interactions begin in infancy. These interactions increase in frequency, complexity and also in diversity with increasing age. The maximum peer interaction takes place during adolescence. Parent-

child and child peer interactions are complementary to one another.

● Friendship with peers can occur as early as first year of life. The friendship begins to become more stable during elementary school period.

● During childhood friendship helps to develop intimacy and self-disclosure. During adolescence friendship gets a special importance. In school children's friendship often shows clear status hierarchies.

● Poverty in a family influences the quality of home life which in turn influences children's education.

● The family is supposed to care for and socialize the children. Preventative measures should be taken to stop abuse at home. The teachers mainly the school counsellors must play an important role to help family members to care for and socialize their children.

2.7 FURTHER READING

● Feldman, (2010). *Discovering the Life Span.* Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd.

● Libert, R. M., Wicks-Nelson, R. & Kalia, R. V. (1986). *Developmental Psychology,* 4th ed., Englewood cliffs, N.J.

● Pressley, M. & McCormick, C.B. (2007). Child and Adolescent *Development for Educators*. New York: The Guildford Press.

2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q 1: Do you think peer preferences change as the children grow?

Q 2: When the first friendship with peers occurs?

Q 3: At what stage the friendship helps to develop intimacy and self-disclosure?

Q 4: How the child defines friend at elementary school?

B) **Short Questions** (Answer in about 150 words)

Q 1: How the preschool children express friendship?

Q 2: Why relationship with a teacher is important for socialization?

C) **Long Questions** (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the role family and school in child abuse.

Q 2: How poverty can affect childhood?

Q 3: Why friendship gets special importance in adolescence?

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