UNIT II

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

The chapters in Unit I were all addressed to you for the understanding of self and of the factors that influence your decision making. Let us now move on to understanding the family, the community and the society that you are a part of. In the first section – Chapter 9 the focus will be on relationships and interactions with 'significant others', i.e., those important to you in these contexts. The second section – Chapter 10 will discuss concerns and needs, such as those of health, work, resources, education and textile tradition in the adolescent's diverse social contexts.

Relationships and Interactions with 'Significant Others'

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A. Family

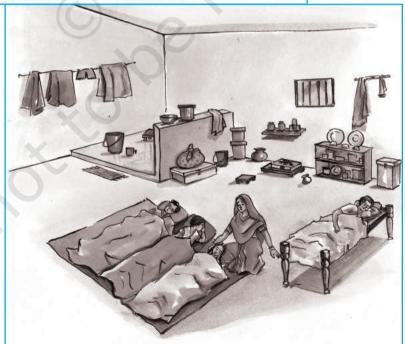## IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

The pictures show you scenes of children in their homes. Notice that there are adults taking care of children, including some older people. In some pictures there is only a mother or father and children. They are all related to each other by blood or through marriage or adoption. One thing common to all situations regardless of the socio-economic or cultural variation is that there are at least two or more than two generations of persons staying together, i.e., mother and children, grandparents and children, parents and adult unmarried children, related to each other by blood or marriage. An exception is that of two adults, a husband and wife, who are of the same generation, and yet they form the beginning of a family.

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9A.1 Introduction

You and all of your classmates live with your families. **Families** are basic units of society. Families are needed to meet the needs of individuals, both children and adults. The family also helps to continue the culture of any society. It provides care and nurturance to all the children, thus contributing to their wholesome development. In the earlier chapters you have studied how adequate nutrition and other experiences contribute to the physical well-being of the child. Similarly, for a baby to grow into a caring and productive member of the society, she must have positive socio-emotional experiences, relationships and a feeling of belongingness. Through parenting, families attempt to provide all these experiences to children. You could recall incidents in your family when you were down with fever. How did your parents take care of you? Or the times when you were not feeling cheerful and happy, and the other members of your family may have tried to make you feel better. There are numerous such examples in everyone's life where parents, or siblings or other members may have given a comforting hand or encouragement. Thus families not only nurture, they also provide stability and support in times of need. Every child has a right to be reared in a family.

Not all children are so fortunate to have families with both parents staying together, under one roof. In your neighbourhood, you may know that there are some children who have lost a parent due to death. In such cases, the other parent, usually fulfil the tasks of father as well as mother, may be helped by an aunt or grandmother. We are also aware that many times mothers and fathers have problems living together and decide to separate. In such circumstances children may be cared for by a single parent.

As far as possible, children should not be removed from their families. You may now think about those children who, due to unfortunate circumstances, such as flood or earthquake, may become destitute. How can they seek experiences of living in a family? In such instances adoption or care in an institution are the available options. It is the responsibility of the state to care for these children.

You may be familiar with the sight of young children or adolescents who appear to be homeless. Some of them have left home or children's institutions on their own in search of livelihood. Some others may have been abandoned by families or may have got lost. Such children are referred to as 'street children'. They usually do live in their families of origin, but the other children they live with on the street become like family to them. Sometimes, these children return to their families.

We could hence define the term family as "a *group of persons united by – the ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household, interacting with each other in their respective social roles of husband and*

wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister or any other, creating a common culture".

When you fill up your examination forms, you had to write the name of the head of the family. Whose name did you write? Reflect on your own name; your first name is a name given by your parents but the second name for many, that is surname, is common for all family members. This is mostly the father's family name. Among tribes in the North-East and South, the second name is that of the mother. The families that use father's name for identification are called **Patrilineal** and the ones that use the mother's name are known as **Matrilineal**. Being patriarchal or matriarchal decides the authority, i.e., father's or mother's, and more importantly the rules of inheritance are also governed by this.

Patrilocal and matrilocal residence refers to the living arrangement where patrilocal families are those that reside in the father's native home and matrilocal ones are those where the residence is in the mother's native home.

On the basis of who all live together, the family could be identified as nuclear or extended. If you are living with your parents, brothers and sisters, then it is called a **nuclear family**. Some of you must be having grandparents and/or uncles and aunts living with you, which is called an **extended family**. A **joint family** is one where several generations of members live together; specifically a couple with married children (usually sons) and unmarried children and their offspring live together as a joint household. These can be of a very large size, and are often also joined by the same occupation. In families where there are adults other than parents, usually work and responsibilities are shared, especially the care of children. In nuclear families, the parents are largely on their own for the care for their children. In some families you will see that though the grandparents or other family members do not stay with the family, they keep coming regularly to stay. Sometimes if both the parents are going out to work, they may leave the children at a relative's place. Therefore, even when children are living in a nuclear family, they have the experience of interacting with others. There are advantages and disadvantages of having large families, but the well-being of members depends mostly on the individuals concerned.

9A.2 FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Whatever the structure or number of members or location of the family, this institution is committed towards providing some essential functions for its members, especially children. These are:

1. **Providing nurturance**: All families provide legitimate platforms for couples to live and reproduce, and continue the lineage. Recalling your own experiences as children, you would know that all families

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make efforts to provide nurturance to their children by looking after their needs. The provision for emotional needs through affection and care are equally important in nurturing a sense of belongingness. As we grow older our need of being wanted and loved does not diminish. These needs for affiliation and affection are present at every age, although the expression and manifestations can be different. A young adolescent boy may not appear as if he needs to be nurtured due to sudden physical change in his body and the need for autonomy, but he does not stop needing the loving support of a caring family. A grandmother may also be eagerly awaiting the arrival of her grandchildren to share her time and do things with them. Thus the family attempts to provide love, care and support to its members at all ages, and through various experiences and situations.

2. **Socialisation**: This is the process of teaching the young generation about social processes through everyday interactions. We can see that the family is in a unique position to act as a link between continuity and change through the process of socialisation. The 'We' feeling within the family is helpful in transmitting attitudes and sentiments. How often have you heard your mother or father saying "No, you can't do this because it is not done in our family" or "In our family children have to study very hard". The values that families pass on to the young ones are often filtered and adapted from the general social scenario of the community, the region and the nation. Although there are many common practices, each family adopts these in its own unique way.

Activity 1

Make a list of do's and don'ts in your family for boys and girls. Discuss these in class and make comparisons with children from other families. This should help you to understand that although there are similarities, each family provides a unique experience to its members.

3. **Conferring a status and role to individuals**: Do you realise that here in school, you have the status of a student regardless of your gender; but in your home setting, you have a different status which can vary from family to family. An adolescent boy may be playing the roles of a son, a brother and a brother-in-law. Each role carries certain responsibilities and features that are socially defined. These arrangements bring stability and predictability in an individual's life because of which it becomes easier to perform day-to-day responsibilities.

Activity 2

Convene a debate in the class on the topic, "Traditions are a hindrance to modern living".
Conclude in the class by noting the positive and negative dimensions of traditions.

4. **Economic function**: Parents all over the world are busy earning a livelihood to generate income to provide for the family. Families provide for their children and also for other adults, older persons, and developmentally challenged children/adults, who may be temporarily non-productive. Your own experiences in and around your family and community can substantiate this point.

The family is a primary unit of society. Maintaining relations with the community and the society are also within its purview. Thus the family also needs to spend resources for maintaining relations with relatives, friends, the community and the country. For instance, we contribute to different groups like *panchayats* and welfare associations, give gifts at marriages and birthdays, and we participate by giving our time to social events. These are all examples of active participation of families in the larger society.

> ### Activity 3
>
> Interact with your parents and make a note of a recent expenditure that was special, like a gift for a relative or friend. Note the amount and choice of gifts, and any comments your parents may have.

5. **Fulfilling the need for psychological support**: Everyday, family members travel out of the home to various places, for example, children go to school and parents go to their workplaces. Yet at the end of the day there is often a feeling of comfort of returning to the familiar space of the family. Along with the basic needs of food, clothes and shelter, a person needs intimate human response, acceptance and love. This feeling of security is known to be quite important for the development of a healthy all-round individual. The absence of a positive atmosphere at home can be a likely cause of stress and disturbance at any age.

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Thus, maintaining harmonious relationships and supportive roles for all of its members remains one of the significant responsibilities of the family. Within a family, members are likely to have caring and reciprocal relationships. We learn to give and take affection from each other. This formulates the basis for later development. Most societies rely almost entirely upon the family for affectionate responses.

It is important to reiterate here that there is a small minority of street children who lack social and psychological support from their biological family. They may seek such support from their peers or adults in similar situations. Many children who are abandoned or orphaned may find themselves in children's homes run by the state or various NGOs. All of them have a right to care and education.

6. **Other functions**: The family also fulfils other functions which are recreational, religious and social and are important for the continuity of society.

Families usually visit others (family or friends) for social functions like birthdays, puja ceremonies or other such activities.

Another important task that the families have been doing is in socialising its young ones for community duties. Family is the 'school' of civic values. Can you recall your first lessons regarding ownership of property or things when, by mistake, you may have brought home another child's pencil or eraser, and you were asked to return it? Similarly if you look back at your childhood experiences you will be able to recollect incidents which are evidence of families providing opportunities for learning to share, love, cooperate, tolerate, sacrifice and obey. These qualities enable one to grow into a healthy citizen.

9A.3 FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

Saguna had gone to the wedding of her elder sister. She came back home and asked her mother. "Could Sudhadi and jijaji be called a family? Or are they a couple?" Her mother took some time to reflect and then said that "Look Saguna, Sudha and her husband are a couple; yet they are at the beginning stage of the family". Now does that make you wonder about the stages in family life? Look around and you will find that there are families at different stages. If we continue the example of Sudha and her husband they may soon have children who will grow from infancy to adulthood and then they are likely to establish their own families. When they are old, Sudha and her husband will probably be left as husband and wife in the household. The cycle that started with their being a couple brings them back to being a couple again. Thus, you will see that the entire family life is cyclic in nature. That is why it is called the "Family Life Cycle". In the box you will find the different stages of the family life cycle. Each stage has challenges and tasks to be performed which are beneficial for the development of its members, at that phase of family life.

> The family life cycle adopts a longitudinal view of family life. It is based on the recognition of successive phases and patterns as they happen over the years.

Stages in the family life cycle of a nuclear family
The family life cycle generally consists of seven stages. These include– 1. Married couple (without children) 2. Child bearing family 3. Family with preschool-age children 4. Family with school-age children and adolescents 5. Family launching young adults into higher education/work 6. Middle-aged parents with grown up/married children 7. Ageing couple—retirement to death of both spouses

9A.4 FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Shri and Shrimati Kumar live in Ravi's neighbourhood. They are taking care of their newborn baby and their older daughter goes to school. The Patels who stay upstairs have school going children and they are always worried about the marks the children are getting in school. In Ravi's family the maid who comes to help is anxious because her daughter wants to pursue her studies further, but she does not have the money. In all these stories you will notice that the parents are performing different tasks for the family. The variety in the tasks that the parents perform depends

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ACTIVITY 4

Pick out the family developmental tasks related to the stage which your family is in and observe the tasks that your parents have been doing. Report in the class noting the variations in the performance of tasks due to family structure, number of children and adults present.

on the age group of their children. Therefore, we can say that family developmental tasks are those responsibilities that are specifically related to the needs of the family members.

9A.5 FAMILY DYNAMICS

Family members perform their roles while interacting with one another. Each family has its own patterns of interaction. These are called family dynamics. They are influenced by factors such as the structure of the family — the number of children and adults, and how they are related – the personalities of family members, cultural background, values, and personal or family experiences.

Understanding and relating with parents is one of the most important activities in the family. Parents have a very powerful influence over children's personality and future life. When parents and adolescents share an easy communication based on positive understanding together they could build a happy, successful family life. To accomplish this understanding all members need to value and respect each other.

ACTIVITY 5

How well do I know my mother/father?
- What is your mother's full name?
- What is her birth place?
- What is your father's full name?
- Who gave you your last name?
- Where did your mother spend most of her childhood?
- Where did your father spend most of his childhood?
- What is your mother's level of education?
- What is your father's level of education?
- What makes your mother happy?
- What makes your father happy?
- What does your mother want you to become?
- What does your father want you to become?

Note for the teacher–

By the end of this session the students will be able to assess their own understanding and knowledge of their parents as individuals. Moreover this is likely to sensitise them to their parents' needs, perceptions and aspirations.

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9A.6 Handling Situations

Parents' advice to young people is sometimes seen as interference by children. However, it is important for children to realise that parenting is a difficult and challenging task that requires life-long commitment. Similarly, parents and other adults also need to realise that children have a need to make their own place in the family and society. It is important for each member to appreciate the responsibilities of others without conflict and tension. Career choices, dresses young people wear, choice of friends, sharing household responsibilities and television watching are some areas of family disagreements and conflicts. Each family has different ways of handling such conflicts. In single parent families where either parent is absent for one reason or the other, the responsibility of the remaining parent becomes more crucial. As a young person one needs to show extra sensitivity and understanding to a mother/father who is trying to do the job of both the parents. Understanding the other person's perspective is an effective way of conflict management.

ACTIVITY 6

Perspective taking

1. Choose a conflict situation, e.g., career choice.
2. Teacher could point out that there are four perspectives to it — (1) Adolescent's (2) Mother's (3) Father's (4) the fourth perspective could be that of the teacher/ school counsellor.
3. All four perspectives could be role-played by the students in class.
4. After 10 minutes of role play the parts should be exchanged, i.e., the student who played Father shall now play the part of an Adolescent and the one who became the counsel or could be the Mother.
5. The activity could be concluded by discussing how the experience may have helped them in having better insights into the other persons' perspectives.

9A.7 Support and Strength to Members

You have learnt in the earlier unit on development of self that one of the developmental tasks of a person of your age is learning to act as adults among adults. Middle-aged parents may develop problems such as poor health, a set-back in career, transfer of either parent to a distant place, death in family, added responsibility of an older relative, financial crisis, etc. The understanding and contribution of young people and children during difficult circumstances cannot be underestimated. The presence and company of children have the potential to help families through even the most difficult crisis.

Let us now see what helps family members understand one another's needs and emotions. It has been found that **communication** has an important role in this.

9A.8 COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY

You must have often heard that human beings are social animals. But, did you know that 70 per cent of our active time, that is waking hours, are spent communicating in some form or the other? Perhaps your day begins with someone in the family or an alarm clock waking you up to get ready for school, and then go to school with friends, all this while talking to someone or the other. From morning assembly, to interacting with school teachers, class mates and the principal, the entire learning experience involves formal and informal communication. The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of settings is essential for leading a happy and productive life.

Similarly, while we are at home, we communicate differently with elders, our siblings—younger or older, grandparents, neighbours and helpers at home. Thus family communication is the way verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members. These interactions develop over time among a group of related individuals who share common living space.

Communication within the family is extremely important because it enables members to express their needs, wants, and concerns to one another and offer social and emotional support. It is a unifying element since speaking and listening behaviours are intertwined. Communication involves the ability to pay attention to what others are thinking and feeling. In other words, an important part of communication is not just talking, but listening to what others have to say. It is through communication that family members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families. Open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another.

Four styles of communication have been identified which are as follows—

(i) **Clear and direct communication:** Clear and direct communication is the healthiest form of communication and occurs when the message is stated plainly and directly to the appropriate family member. An example of this style of communication is when a father, disappointed about his son failing to complete his chore, states, "Son, I'm disappointed that you forgot to take your grandmother to the doctor today".

(ii) **Clear and indirect communication:** In this second style of communication, the message is clear, but it is not directed to the

person for whom it is intended. Using the previous example, the father might say, "It's disappointing when people forget to complete their chores." In this message the son may or may not know that his father is referring to him.

(iii) **Masked and direct communication:** Masked and direct communication occurs when the content of the message is unclear, but directed to the appropriate family member. The father in our example may say something like, "Son, people just don't pay attention as they used to."

(iv) **Masked and indirect communication:** Masked and indirect communication occurs when both the message and intended recipient are unclear. In unhealthy family relationships, communication tends to be very masked and indirect. An example of this type of communication might be the father stating, "The youth of today are very lazy and irresponsible."

It is important to note here that the communication styles are also mediated by culture. For instance, direct and open communication may be more acceptable in a western society (e.g., U.S.); however in the hierarchical structure of Indian families, indirect communication may be preferred as direct communication with older persons may be considered disrespectful.

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9A.9 Keys to Building Effective Family Communication

With increased professional commitments for urban families and anxiety and competition experienced by young people in rural areas, it is important that our communication behaviour equips us to face these daily challenges rather than feel. There are many approaches that families can adopt to become more effective communicators, and in turn, to improve the quality of their relationships. Following are some suggestions for building effective family communication.

- *Communicate frequently:* One of the most difficult challenges facing urban families today is finding time to spend together. With our busy schedules, it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with one another in meaningful conversation. It is extremely important for members in families to make time to try and communicate regularly to and directly. Sometimes, eating meals together is a good idea, without the TV turned on. It can be a good idea to switch off the TV and eat dinner together; or sit together on a Sunday afternoon to talk about important issues that effect the family. Similarly, spending time with elders in the family will strengthen family bonds, and talking with them will help young persons relax and make the elders feel that they are important, thus inducing a feeling of mutual love and respect.

- *Communicate clearly:* It has been found that families that appear happy, usually communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear manner. This is especially important while attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., between spouses, parents and children). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but it will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.
- *Be an active listener:* An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying one's best to understand the point of view of the other person. It is important to pay close attention to the verbal and non-verbal messages and cues. As an active listener, one must acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said?" or "Did I understand you correctly?" Active listening involves acknowledging and respecting the other person's point of view.

Family will always remain a significant context for an individual. With development; however, the child's universe of interaction widens. After the family, for most children school is another vital context which offers the opportunity to interact with other people who are likely to have a significant influence on their lives. The school also provides the opportunity to build multiple, significant non-family relationships. The next chapter on 'School: Peers and Educators' discusses this aspect.

Key Terms

Family, Patrilineal, Matrilineal, Nuclear family, Extended family, Family life cycle, Family developmental tasks, Communication in family

■ REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define the term family. Discuss the different variations in family types.
2. Discuss any three functions of the family with examples.
3. Write short notes on—
   (a) Family life cycle
   (b) Family developmental task
   (c) Family dynamics
   (d) Conflict situations in the family
4. What is the significance of communication in the family? Using your own family as an example, describe the communication patterns. Suggest how communication between family members can be improved.

■   ## PRACTICAL 8

Family

Theme   Areas of agreements and disagreements with family members, friends and teachers.

Tasks   1. Listing the areas of agreements and disagreements
2. Identifying ways of resolving disagreements

Purpose of practical: Adolescence is a time when you are forming a sense of your identity. Often, but not always, this process may bring you in conflict with your family members and significant others as your views on particular aspects may be different from theirs. This can cause stress in relationships. This practical will help you to identify sources of disagreements and will also encourage you to reflect on how you can minimise and resolve these differences.

Conduct of practical: Form yourself into groups of 4-6 students. For the first 10 minutes, reflect individually upon your interactions with your family members, friends and teachers in the past few months. Use the following format to record the areas of agreements and disagreements.

Person	Area of Agreement	Area of Disagreement	Comment
Father			
Mother			
Sister			
Brother			
Friends			
Teachers			

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Now share your data with the other members of the group and discuss the following—

1   (a)   Whether there are areas where most of you have disagreements with a particular family member, friends, teachers.
(b)   Why do you think this happens?
(c)   What are you doing presently to resolve the disagreements?
(d)   What can be done to resolve/minimise the differences?

2.   (a)   Whether there are areas where only you seem to be having differences while the rest of the group members do not have disagreements in that area?
(b)   What could be the reason for this?
(c)   Can you do something to resolve the disagreements?

3. (a) Which are the areas where most of you are in agreement with the family members, friends and teachers.

   (b) Can you use these areas of agreement to build a stronger relationship with the persons around you and thus reduce the areas of disagreements?

B. School
Peers and Educators

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this section the learner is able to—
- discuss the role of school in developing new relationships.
- understand how relationships with peers transform as the child grows.
- know the importance of developing friendships.
- analyse the influence of education and teachers on students' development and achievement.

9B.1 SCHOOL

In your view is school just a place to study or something more? What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear/read/think of the word 'school'? Studies and examinations, most of you would say! Hard work and some degree of fear, you may want to add! But school is also a place where you meet friends and some of these friendships lead to lasting, even life-long relationships. You also meet adults in the role of teachers and many of them shape your attitude towards learning, towards new subjects, and in fact towards life! Most of you would have a special feeling about one or more teachers who have taught you during your school life – teachers whom you admire and look upto. Thus school, apart from serving an academic function in our lives, is also a network of social relationships that influence our values, behaviour and thinking, both directly through the process of teaching-learning, and indirectly, as we interact with peers and educators in the school. In other words, it is one of the agents of socialisation. In this chapter we will focus on the role of school as a place for developing relationships and interactions with 'significant others' in our life.

9B.2 Peer Relationships

Infants as young as six months show an interest in other infants. When placed together they may attempt to touch each other, smile and look at each other. But at this time they treat the other just as an object – they do not respond to or see them as persons in the ways that we understand. Between one and three years of age, the child begins to realise that other children are persons and begin to have social interactions with them. In the early years, a friend is someone who lives close to you; in other words one who is available for play. These friendships usually have nothing to do with liking the person or her/his qualities. At this age, most children do not show a preference for any one playmate. They play together occasionally, using the same toy or interacting with each other, but most of the time they play on their own.

In the preschool years the child starts relating to others in a more sustained manner. But early friendships are superficial. They are quickly formed and quickly broken – the child may be friends with another child who has a toy that she wants; however, the friendship may not carry over to the next day, unlike the friendships of an older child. Thus during the preschool age, a friend is someone with whom the child 'does things' such as playing with toys. During the later part of preschool years, interactions between children become more sustained. Older preschoolers play with each other, cooperate and take turns during play. They may also prefer some peers over others. By the beginning of middle childhood years, the child begins to realise that friends are those with whom one shares common interests and feelings and not just those who have things one likes. The child begins to realise that trusting each other, responding to each other's needs and presence of desirable qualities such as kindness and considerateness in friends are critical features of friendship. They understand that friends help each other. During the middle childhood years the child's circle of friends usually increases – the child spends more time with friends and their influence also becomes more powerful. By adolescence friendships become deeper and friends share each others' innermost thoughts and feelings.

You have read in the chapter on 'self' that by the time the child becomes an adolescent, friends may become even more important than the parents. Most adolescents usually have a small group of close friends – called 'clique' – and a larger number of friends who are at some distance – called 'crowd'. The crowd is a loosely organised group of peers who tend to be together because of shared interests and activities. However, members of the crowd are not close to each other as members of cliques are. Thus young people watching a stage show form a crowd and a group of adolescents planning an outing together are part of a clique.

9B.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships at every age are important because they help the child feel accepted by people who are like her. This gives the child a sense of emotional security which is important for the development of social and emotional relationships in adult life. Children who are rejected by peers are likely to show aggressive behaviour and are also likely to interrupt group activities through deviant behaviour. They tend to remain alone or; may join deviant subcultures whose values and activities may be markedly different from those of the mainstream culture. This can cause a lot of harm to the child.

During adolescence there is a tremendous pressure on the adolescent to conform to the values held by the peer group and behave in ways considered appropriate by them. These values and behaviours may be contradictory to parental values, and this coupled with decline in conformity to parents' values and demands by the adolescents, can lead to tremendous conflict with the parents. However, it is important to understand that experiencing such a peer pressure to conform is a normal feature of growing up. In fact, **being able to express feelings and experiences with friends which the adolescent would not be able to share at home helps the adolescents feel 'normal' and not alone**, as they realise that their friends have similar concerns and experiences. Also, by the end of adolescence, peer pressure tends to decline and the growing adult is able to look at issues from multiple perspectives. However, it is also true that under pressure to conform many adolescents can get involved in anti-social activities which are dangerous to the self and the society. These include experimenting with drugs and sex without adequate protection and information. Adolescents and their parents need to understand each others' points of view and concerns. This can happen when there is free-flowing communication between parents and adolescents – something which both parties have to work towards.

It is also important to remember that in many cultures peer values may be quite similar to values held by adults in the society, in which case adolescents would not experience as much conflict with parents. In such a situation, peers would serve to reinforce the values held by the society.

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ACTIVITY 1	ACTIVITY 2
You have read about many aspects of friendship in various stages of a child's development. Reflect upon your own experiences and think of friends who have influenced you in different ways.	As adolescents, are there aspects in which you agree with your friends but disagree with parents? Discuss these in the class.

9B.4 INFLUENCE OF THE TEACHERS

Teachers are a major influence in the school. Like parents, they set limits, make demands, communicate values and foster development. Teachers are powerful role models and often impact a child's development. Children are most likely to imitate the behaviour of teachers they like and value, and they also tend to enjoy subjects taught by teachers whom they admire.

Teachers' expectations of students often, but not always, have a major influence on student performance and behaviour. It has been found that teachers' expectations influence student achievement, motivation, self-esteem, expectancy for success and actual achievement. This has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect is that, by and large, teachers may behave more positively towards students from whom they have high expectations. They smile at them more frequently, praise them more often, supervise their work more closely, and press them harder to find answers. And when they perform poorly, the teachers are likely to encourage them to work harder. Thus they communicate to these students that they are expected to succeed. The negative aspect is that the teachers are not likely to press or motivate the students from whom they have lower expectations. The teachers' expectations become a **self-fulfilling prophecy**, with the children becoming, achieving and behaving as the teacher expect them to become. Studies have shown that if a student has average ability, but the teacher is informed that the child has tremendous potential, the teacher modifies her/his ways of relating to the child so that the child actually improves upon past performance.

The implication of the above discussion is that teachers need to be conscious of the harmful effects of low expectations. There is need to avoid pre-judgment of children's abilities. Also, even if the child is not performing adequately at any given time, there is every chance that the child can do better in the future, given adequate support and encouragement. Teachers need to have reasonably optimal demand of achievement from all students and not merely from a few. Children's achievement needs to be judged against their own past performance and not compared only with the class average.

The teacher-taught relationship is the essence of the teaching-learning process. Philosophers and educators in India and the world have visualised the teaching-learning process as one where knowledge is co-constructed between the teacher and the learner. The *Guru* in the ancient learning tradition of India had a vibrant role – his role as revealed in the *Upanishads* was to make the pupil completely independent and himself completely superfluous. However, this independence was believed to be achieved after years of hard work, learning, dedication and devotion. They encouraged questioning, probing and sustained enquiry by the students so that the students' own creativity came to the fore. In the contemporary

Indian context, the role of the school and educators is mediated by factors such as the pressure of ensuring that students get high marks in their examinations. There are teachers who merely dictate lessons to their students, allowing no questioning. When students do not experience the school and the learning process as one of psychological safety, it is doubtful that the education system would succeed in helping them form healthy relationships with their teachers. However, there are teachers who play a very constructive role in the education of their students, and act as their mentors and guides for future.

School is thus a significant context influencing the adolescent's development. In the next chapter we shall learn about Community and Society, the larger contexts in which the micro-contexts of family and school are situated.

Key terms and their meaning

Clique: a group of a few close friends

Crowd: a larger number of peers who are at some social distance from each other

Peer pressure: pressure on the adolescent to conform to the values held by the peer group and behave in ways considered appropriate by them.

Co-construction: when the teacher and the student both contribute to the development of understanding and knowledge, it is a perspective that holds that knowledge is not a static body of information that is passed on from the all knowing teacher to the 'empty' student; rather both the student and the teacher recreate knowledge during the teaching-learning process as they bring their own experiences and understanding to the teaching-learning situation and try to re-discover and re-interpret the knowledge as stated in the books or as being stated by the teacher

Psychological safety: an atmosphere where the person does not experience threat to her/his self-esteem; where the person experiences a sense of self-worth and a positive regards of her /his abilities. In such an atmosphere the person is able to participate freely with a sense of security about the negative reactions of others.

Here is a brain teaser for you. Check your skill in solving the puzzle
In **Column 1** are some words you have read in the chapter above. Unjumble the words and match them with the meaning after locating it in **Column 2**.

Column 1	Column 2
1. dowcr …………	• larger number of friends who are at some distance
2. quelci ……………	• a group of small number of close friends

3. repe repsruse	• need to conform to the values and behaviours
4. fles-uliflflgin oprhpcey	• children becoming, achieving and behaving as the teacher expected them to become
5. urug	• encourages questioning, probing and sustained enquiry by the students

■ **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Explain how the school is a place for forming relationships and interacting with significant others?
2. Explain how the nature of friendship changes from infancy to adolescence?
3. Why are friendships important?
4. What is meant by the term 'peer pressure'? How can this be a source of stress for the adolescent?
5. Discuss how teachers and their behaviour can influence students' achievement and motivation?

C. COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this section the learner is able to—
- discuss the concepts of community and society.
- describe the significance of society in the lives of individuals and families, and its relationship to culture.
- explain the role of media as a social influence.
- elaborate on the responsibility of individuals towards community living.

9C.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters, you have learnt about the importance of the family, school and friends in the lives of individual people. Human beings are a social species; we live in close connection with other people in our lives. After birth, the human infant is the most dependent of all newborns across all mammals, and remains so for the longest period in comparison. This period of dependence allows for close interactions between the caregiver and infant and facilitates important developments in early life that lay the foundations for the future. **Sociability is a critical attribute in human life.** We like to be among other people, we build our idea about ourselves from listening to others and seeing their reactions to us, we learn about our society and culture by engaging with people around us; and we develop a sense of right and wrong by looking around us. These are some of the examples of the ways in which groups can influence individual development. This does not imply that the reverse cannot be true. As sentient living beings (beings that have sensory organs) we are deeply affected by what we experience. This is one of the primary reasons
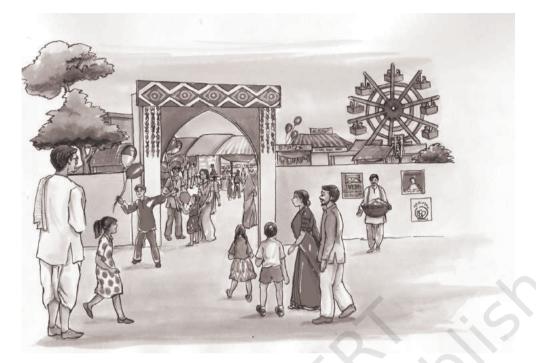
why we are deeply affected by our experiences; our dealings with other people are one of the main influences on our lives.

9C.2 COMMUNITY

The idea of a community is of a group that shares common values, beliefs, spaces, interests and a common heritage. The size of the group does not matter; a community can be a small group of people who share common activity, or even a group of people who may temporarily gather for common purposes like a chat community on the internet, or a group of children getting together to play regular sports in a field. The term 'community' is also used to refer to people who live within a common area and share a common environment. Due to these shared features, community members are of importance to each other, whether they are aware of it or not. The terms society or ethnic group also imply the same shared reality as 'community'. In common usage, these terms can be used interchangeably.

From ancient times, individuals have lived in clusters where work, food, shelter, children's care and many other activities are shared with other people. Although the family has sustained as the longest standing group over centuries, people outside the family also provide very important input in people's lives. Even people whom you never meet may play a critical role in your life. In some sense, people living in a country, and indeed, people of the world can also be considered as a community. For instance, if we wish to speak about the consequences of global warming, we can discuss the consequences of collective action on the people of the world as a community. Citizens of a country share a government, a constitution, and an economy. **Thus community is an abstract idea of a collection of people, and is not limited to any one shared characteristic.** In Sociology, the terms community and society have slightly different meanings. Society implies a larger, more abstract concept of human grouping, whereas, a community is defined as a grouping with a more cohesive unit. Family and kinship are considered examples of communities, with a great deal of shared knowledge and experience, beliefs and values.

Different types of communities

Let us consider examples of communities around us, that is, people with whom we share certain experiences. The simplest starting point after the family is the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood is an important social unit since these are the people among whom we live, with whom we share our daily activities. Of course this does not imply that all members of a neighbourhood are exactly the same. Far from it! However, there is a sharing of life circumstances that makes us similar in some ways. For
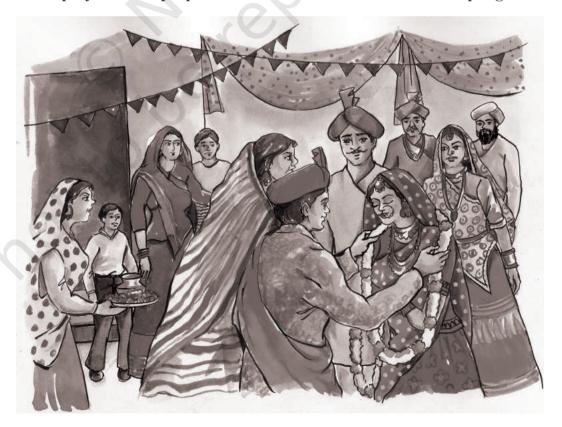
instance, most neighbours use services of the locality that are provided, like marketplace, health care, schooling and play areas for children. This brings people together, and often results in conversations, friendships and even cooperation. During festival time, for example, people belonging to different religious groups may bring food specially prepared for families to share their celebrations with others. Neighbours are also very important in times of crises. In emergencies, sometimes neighbours are the first people towards whom we can turn, even before family and friends. People usually help each other in such moments, although there are differences in the extent of support that different people are willing to offer. It is true that we will be more willing to assist someone living near us, whom we know, than we are to help a stranger on the street, about whom we may know nothing. At this point, it is important to discuss the organisation of community living and social institutions that are different in different ecological settings like a village and a city.

There are differences between cities, towns and villages in the way the homes, the services and the society are organised. We do find that homes in a neighbourhood of a big city can become quite distant and many people do not often talk to or know each other very well, although there are many exceptions to this. In villages and towns, in contrast, there is a greater sense of belonging and closeness among neighbours. People usually know all the families living in their locality in a village, and if the village is small, then they would even know all the families that reside within. People would recognise each other by name, at least of the head of the family, and any stranger would be spotted instantly. This does not mean the city people

are not friendly; sometimes the pressures of dual incomes and city life can leave little time for interactions such as these. Further, the increasing mobility in urban spaces, where everyone does not own the house they live in, can also result in lower interaction. In villages, on the other hand, it seems that everyone knows everyone else. Families are identified by their members, and not by address. Life in townships is somewhere in between these extremes, where some of the character of village life sustains, since people do know each other reasonably well; and yet there is some mobility, higher employment outside the home, and other factors common with city life. That is why social scientists tend to differentiate between rural, urban and tribal societies, since these are organised somewhat differently from each other. Another important feature to note is that social institutions, like schools, community centres, health clinics, local political bodies, are also differently organised in rural and urban areas. There is a greater sense of anonymity in urban spaces, which remains an important characteristic in the social interactions, social control and changing social reality.

Apart from the neighbourhood, village, town or city, we also have other kinds of communities. For example, people who speak a common language or belong to the same native place (in a large city, for example) get together for specific occasions. For instance, we can see that during the period around September/October, *Durga Puja* is an important event for the Bengali speaking community. We find several *pandals* put up for the days of the prayer where people come and celebrate, eat and worship together.

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Children have fun and games in these areas, young people dance for worship and older members sit and watch and pray to the goddess for her blessings.

In the state of Maharashtra, as another example, the celebration of *Ganesh Puja* is performed with a lot of pomp and show during *Ganesh Chaturthi.* People get together, collect funds and organise special activities regularly over a period of several days and then finally culminate the celebrations with the immersion of the Ganesha idols in sea/river water. Thus we can see that religious membership, ethnic group and common language are some of the ways in which larger society can be organised into smaller, more identifiable groupings.

Note that one person can potentially be a member of many communities. For example, a child from a Parsi family is also attending a school, and automatically becomes a member of the school community. She may also be learning dance under the guidance of a teacher, so she is also a member of that dance group. This girl may be a part of a group of people who have got together to prevent cruelty to animals on the street. This makes her a member of that animal lovers group also. Thus, at any given time, we are all members of several groups and communities and sometimes we may not even be aware of these memberships. However, these memberships are important for us in the formation of our identity and our sense of belongingness to a group.

> ### ACTIVITY 1
>
> List the names of a few communities that you can think of including your own. List the common characteristics of these communities. Discuss this with your peers as well as the teacher to get ideas about the communities of which you are members. Sometimes you may not realise that these are your characteristics too.

Functions of communities

As discussed already, communities play an essential role in a person's life. However, it is also true that communities cannot exist without people. Thus there is a dynamic, co-constructive relationship between the individual person and her/his community. Although the community provides a person with identity, support, social control (what to do and what not to do), goals and activities, individuals comprising a community do the actual work in order to make things happen. Without the participation of the individual members of a community, there can be no social organisation. For instance, when a family gets together to fulfil the function of teaching new members the rules of any given community, it is transacted through the participation of individual family members. The mother is commonly expected to fulfil the responsibility of bearing and rearing young

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children, the father often provides support to the mother for fulfilling these responsibilities by providing for the family in terms of protection and income. These responsibilities can be shared between fathers and mothers, and with other members of the family, or even others like friends and neighbours. For instance, when the mother goes out of the home for employment, the care of her children may be shared with the father or/ and grandparents. Sometimes even neighbours can help to keep the child until the parents return home. Often older members of a family who share the home can be the caregivers of young children and therefore participate actively in the care of the child. Let us now attempt to enumerate some of the **functions of a community**, any community, whether it is a family, a kin group, a residential community or a country. A community attempts to do some of the following things for its members—

- Provide a sense of identity to a person.
- Provide opportunity for survival, learning, livelihood, entertainment, security and care. This is especially true during periods of vulnerability (when a person is at risk), for example, illness during old age.
- Prepare younger generations for social participation.
- Ensure the survival of the group.
- Participate in the transformation of a person into a functional member of community and society.

ACTIVITY 2

For each of the above functions, discuss with a classmate examples from your own life. Share them in the class as a whole.

9C.3 SOCIETY AND CULTURE

As discussed in the previous section, the concept of society is more flexible in comparison with community. Society can be seen perhaps as people in general, without the notion of sharing specific features, the way we define a community. However, the two terms can also be used interchangeably in ordinary language. The term culture refers primarily to the way of living of a people. Culture consists of all those elements of a person or a group's environment, both tangible (material things) as well as intangible (beliefs, values, practices) that are created by people for their own use. This term (culture) is also used in different ways in ordinary language. Sometimes, culture is used to imply 'high society' when we refer to a person as very 'cultured' for example. This is not the way the term is used in our subject. **We use culture to simply mean the beliefs of people and their ways of living.** It includes the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the language we use and the celebrations that we participate in, among other things. Culture also consists of ideas of people. Thus we can say that culture is a dynamic and complex construction of a variety of things that are part of our present, our past, as well as our future. Like a community, a cultural

group is seen as a group that has shared ideas about things, usually living in close proximity to each other. Also culture should not be confused with country, especially in a country as large as ours where there are countless ethnic groups, several ecological settings and thousands of languages. Our country can be called a multi-cultural society. Officially our country has 22 scheduled languages as per the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India when four new languages were added. These are: Bodo, Maithili, Santhali and Dogri. For each scheduled language, there are many other dialects that are spoken in the concerned states. These official languages can be counted very easily on a 10 rupee note (see Activity 3). You will find only 18 languages on it since this note was printed prior to the addition of the last four. In your counting, do not forget that Hindi and English appear in larger fonts on the note.

ACTIVITY 3

Take a 10 rupee note and look very carefully at all the images and words printed on it. You will see the term Ten Rupees written in both Hindi and English. Note that there are many other languages listed, all of which say the same thing: Ten Rupees. Try to identify all the languages listed here. Hint: These are arranged in alphabetic order.

9C.4 MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Media is an important factor in modern society. Along with the legislature, judiciary and executive, it is the fourth pillar of modern society. Whereas, the other three are concerned with social organisation, social control and functioning, media is the means whereby communication takes place at an organised, group level. The different media that we have, keep us abreast with the events, personalities, and advances in society, local, national and international. Some of the different media that we encounter in our daily lives in modern society include television, newspaper, radio and internet. Each of these sources provides us with a window to the world. If it were not for the media, then we would know only what we discover for ourselves or what people tell us. Media provides us with information from the past and the present, from near and far away. It also exercises an influence on the social trends. For example, television advertisements have been found to have an important influence on the consumption patterns of its viewers. That is why businesses use television for advertising their products. Advertising is now a powerful and vibrant career today.

Media also provides us with information about events related to education and careers. For example, information about examination dates, careers and scholarships are all advertised in national dailies. This way we can access possible places to apply for further education or occupation.

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However, it is important to note that the influence that media information has upon an individual depends on several factors like the person's age, sex, education, ethnic background and of course, temperament. Whenever a new technology is introduced (take for instance mobile phones) it is usually seen that younger generations are more impacted by the invention if it is available to them.

ACTIVITY 4

From a recent newspaper/magazine, identify one article in each of the following areas and bring to the class:

1. Article related to sports
2. Article related to entertainment
3. Matrimonial advertisements
4. Advertisement for a product

Discuss the articles collected in the class. You may classify them in different ways.

Apart from TV and newspaper, we are also connected with the world through the **internet**. Today, we find cyber cafes even in small towns and villages. The information available on the internet is much more varied and detailed than any other media source. Like every powerful medium, there is as much potential harm the internet sources can do; and like any other media source, the most important factor that determines its positive impact on society is the judicious use of the internet. For instance, when we access information on the internet, we can also access sites that have material that may be potentially damaging to the minds of young people. Internet is also a powerful source of sharing information by criminals who work towards harming other people and therefore society in general. It is very important for parents and other concerned adults to be aware of the media accessed by their children. Without being overly strict, parents, teachers and others can guide children towards the optimal use of media sources, and can thus gather important information, receive entertainment and also network with other people.

Thus we can say that **no medium is harmful in and of itself; it is the way in which it is used** and the purpose for which it is used that makes it good or bad. In the following box, there are a few simple guidelines to parents or caregivers for facilitating responsible **television viewing** among children.

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> **In order to facilitate responsible TV viewing the following points are helpful for caregivers.**
> - Always be aware of what programmes your children are watching; preferably watch WITH them rather than using the TV as a substitute for you.
> - TV viewing is a habit, so set the trend early.
> - If you expect the child to be watching limited hours, remember your own pattern of watching TV is the biggest guide for the child.
> - Recommend to the child the programmes that are fun and informative for children.
> - It is often useful to place a TV in a central place so that everyone can watch.
> - Do not use the TV as a punishment (switching off) or reward (can see all the time); this adds unnecessary complication to the dynamics around viewing for long hours.
> - During exams, children want movement and entertainment; let the child watch some TV, BUT ensure that the child gets adequate outdoor activity. This is good for the memory and emotional stability during exams.
> - Explain to the child that the violence and bloodshed (even if it is the news) is hurtful for the people experiencing it, even if you cannot feel the pain.
> - Limit TV viewing to a few programmes a day rather than leaving it on all the time.
> - Avoid viewing late into the night with young children, since many of the programmes are unsuitable for children.
> - Have a variety of activities like indoor games, board games, stories and book reading along with TV.

Another important social influence on individuals is **films**. India is the largest producer of films and it is no surprise that some of the most influential role models are film stars. The fan following of Amitabh Bachchan must include millions of people. These fans look up to him as a role model and try to follow his actions, his appearance and sometimes even his lifestyle. People want to become like him. Actors are therefore charismatic and have a lot of influence on the society. Their conduct is always under scrutiny and our newspapers and TV channels follow their every move very closely. We also listen carefully to news items about them and discuss their lives with our family and friends. Apart from actors, films both reflect and affect social reality. For example, over the years, the image of women in movies has changed, and we are now accepting a greater variety of stories in film. Meanwhile we also see that a number of films are banned by the censor board or a religious community. If films were inconsequential, no one would ban them. The truth is that the multicultural fabric of Indian society provides rich material for film scripts, as well as multiple challenges to movie makers. Films also bring home to us the cultures of different countries. Through foreign films, we learn about new places and people and may know some of their ways of living, whether it is in Europe or America or Australia.

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In this manner, different media provide us with windows to the world, through which we are entertained, informed, emotionally moved and socially networked with people around and all over the world. It is thus a critical dimension of social reality and cultural dynamics.

> ### ACTIVITY 5
>
> Name the latest film you have seen or heard about, recall the story of the film and focus on any one character/role that you liked and one that you did not like. List the reasons for each of your choices.

9C.5 THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD, COMMUNITY AND THE SOCIETY

Individual children enter into the world, in the company of several members, that comprise a family. In previous chapters, you have been able to grasp the importance of the family in the lives of individuals. The family is the primary unit of social life that forms the intersection between the larger social reality, the community life and the individual. It is family members who decide (consciously or unconsciously) what values and practices of larger society they will adopt and which they will oppose. In this manner, every family of a community or a culture will not have identical values. Human beings are diverse on account of personal experiences, social

historical factors and individual temperament, that makes each individual unique.

In same instances, like due to natural or man-made disasters, personal constraints or social difficulties can sometimes lead to the absence of a caring group for the child to grow up in. Sometimes, a family may also be too poor to care for the child adequately. In situations like these, it is important to remember that the State or Central Government is responsible for providing adequate care for the child. The Fundamental Rights in our Constitution state the basic provisions for individual needs. Due to the economic situation in our country, the lack of resources, inadequate distribution and sometimes also lack of outreach, the care of children and families in difficult circumstances by the Government remains unfulfilled. This is a distressing fact of the Indian society; despite the many success stories that we have in the field of technological and educational development, we have not been able to ensure that all children receive adequate food, and that every child has access to schooling and health care. In India, we have a long way to go before the community becomes organised and is involved more effectively in the care of people in difficult circumstances. Undoubtedly, the NGO sector has provided an alternative movement for developing programmes and advocacy for such situations, but we need a more concerted will of the Government machinery along with improved work ethics and better funding to take responsibility for health care, education, entertainment and overall well-being of children and people in difficulty.

All of us have to be aware that if a community provides us with security, and if we have rights in any community, we also have individual and group responsibilities. **Giving back to society and communities from where we have taken is a very important duty of every individual member.** Remember that communities cannot survive without individual will and participation. Therefore, you must resolve to be an active member of your family, community, society, country and the world, in order that you can play your role in the betterment of the future for the generations to come. That is the strength of the relationship between any individual and the group; that there is an exchange of mutual dependence, of rights and responsibilities which we all have to fulfil.

In the next four chapters we shall learn about some crucial concerns that are relevant to all individuals in society. These are – health and nutrition, work and work place, resource availability, learning and education and textile heritage of our country.

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Key Terms

Community, Society, Culture, Social control, Television, Internet, Rights and responsibilities

■ REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Briefly discuss the meaning of a community. What are some of the functions of a community?
2. What do you understand by the term society? How is it different from community or similar to it?
3. What is culture? Discuss using examples.
4. How do TV and internet impact society?
5. Discuss the ways in which an individual can contribute to the society.

■ PRACTICAL 9

Community and Society

Theme Observing and recording group dynamics in different situations
Tasks Observing group dynamics at home, eateries, playfield, school, recreation areas

Purpose of practical: Each of the above constitutes distinct communities. People in a community have certain ways of responding and interacting with each other, depending on the purpose for which the community is organised, the degree of closeness of the community members and the duration for which they are together.

Conduct of practical: Spend one hour each at each of the following locations and observe the group dynamics that takes place while you are present:

Home, eateries, playfield, school, recreation areas

You are not required to interact with the people present – just observe; however if someone initiates interaction with you, respond in a natural manner. Some of the aspects you can note in each of the above communities are the following–
• Number of people present at the location
• Whether all the people were together as a cohesive group or were there many smaller groups of people
• The age range of people in the group
• What was the role of different members? Were some members of the group more active as compared to others? For example, was someone the leader in the group and others were following him?

- What was the communication style among the group members: formal–informal; democratic-hierarchical?
- What was the language used for communication among the group members-mother tongue, English? Was the language used formal or informal?
- The duration for which the group members were together: Will the group form again on another day with the same members or was it a one-time coming together of people?

Record the observations using the following format :

Community	Group Dynamics			
	Number of people present; age range	Role of members	Comm-unication style; language used	One time group or sustained group

In the class, form groups of 4-5 students and present your findings to each other. Discuss amongst yourself whether the group dynamics were similar or different in different communities. Each group should then make its presentation to the entire class.