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I - Semester

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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Social Psychology

Syllabi	Mapping in Book
BLOCK 1 : Scope of Social Psychology **Unit 1: Introduction:** Nature and scope of social psychology; Overview of the history of social psychology (including development in India); Relationship with sociology and anthropology **Unit 2 : Basic concepts of Social Psychology** Definition - Basic concepts of Social Psychology – scope – individual, society and culture – Social Psychology and related disciplines -- Social Psychology in the new millennium - Research Methods in Social Psychology: Survey, Correlation and Experimental Methods **UNIT 3: Brief history of social psychology** (special emphasis on India) Scope of social psychology, levels of social behavior, approaches towards understanding social behavior	**Unit 1:** Introduction to Social Psychology **(Pages 1-10);** **Unit 2:** Basic Concepts of Social Psychology **(Pages 11-25);** **Unit 3:** Brief History of Social Pyschology **(Pages 26-34)**
BLOCK 2: Self-Perception and Behaviours **Unit 4 : Social Perception** **Self-Perception:** Self-concept, Perceived Self-control, Self-serving Bias, Self-presentation, Self-esteem, Self and Gender **Perceiving Others:** Non-Verbal Communication, Attribution, Impression Formation, Impression Management **Unit 5 : Attitudes and** Behavior Attitude formation – Development of Attitudes – Attitude and its influence on behaviour - Persuasion – Change in Attitudes – Resisting persuasion – Cognitive Dissonance – Ways to manage dissonance. **Unit 6 : Prejudice and Aggression** Prejudice -Discrimination in Action – Sources of prejudice – Social, Emotional and Cognitive - Techniques to reduce Prejudice Aggression - Theories of Aggression - Types of Aggression - Determinants ofAggression - Environmental causes - prevention and control of Aggression.	**Unit 4:** Introduction to Self-Perception **(Pages 35-51);** **Unit 5:** Attitudes and Behaviour **(Pages 52-78);** **Unit 6:** Prejudice and Aggression **(Pages 79-112)**
BLOCK 3: Behaviours and Influence **Unit 7 : Prosocial Behavior** Motives for Prosocial behaviour - Factors that Affect Helping Behavior, External and Internal influences on helping behaviour – Long-term commitment to Prosocial Acts **Unit 8: Understanding and evaluating** the social world: Social cognition, Social perception, Attitudes, Attitude-behaviour link; Strategies for attitude change **Unit 9: Social interaction and Influence:** Interpersonal attraction, Pro-Social Behaviour, Aggression, Social Influence **Unit 10: Group Dynamics and Inter-group relations:** Nature of groups, Consequences of belonging (performance, decision making, cooperation and conflict), Nature of intergroup relations (prejudice, intergroup conflict, intervention techniques)	**Unit 7:** Prosocial Behaviour **(Pages 113-124);** **Unit 8:** Understanding and Evaluating the Social World **(Pages 125-142);** **Unit 9:** Social Interaction and Influence **(Pages 143-156);** **Unit 10:** Group Dynamics and Inter-Group Relations **(Pages 157-169)**

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INTRODUCTION

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Within the context of psychology, social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. By this definition, *scientific* refers to the empirical method of investigation. The terms 'thoughts', 'feelings', and 'behaviours' include all psychological variables that are measurable in a human being. Social psychology is an interdisciplinary domain that bridges the gap between psychology and sociology. Social psychologists have studied attitude formation, the structure of attitudes, attitude change, the function of attitudes, and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Because people are influenced by the situation, general attitudes are not always good predictors of specific behaviour. Social psychology is an empirical science that attempts to answer questions about human behaviour by testing hypotheses, both in the laboratory and in the field.

This book, *Social Psychology*, discusses the scope of social psychology, the concept of self-perception and behaviours, the idea of behaviours and influence and the notion of social cognition. It provides knowledge in the field of psychology that tries to describe and explain social behaviour by studying how our thoughts, feelings and actions are influenced by other people.

This book is written with the distance learning student in mind. It is presented in a user-friendly format using a clear, lucid language. Each unit contains an Introduction and a list of Objectives to prepare the student for what to expect in the text. At the end of each unit are a Summary and a list of Key Words, to aid in recollection of concepts learnt. All units contain Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises, and strategically placed Check Your Progress questions so the student can keep track of what has been discussed.

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BLOCK - I

SCOPE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is an established fact that humans are social beings. We almost always seek the company of others. Even though we value our privacy, yet one wishes to stay connected with others. Human beings in their social context form the subject matter of the study of social psychology. The basis of human interaction has been explained historically with the help of several interpretations.

Plato (*The Republic*) views it as arising out of the need to meet our wants. Since one person is often insufficient to take care of all his or her wants, collective functioning becomes useful. According to an English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (*The Leviathan*) without social interaction, man is solitary, poor, nasty and brutish. So, societal interaction was seen as a refinement. Another reputed English philosopher, John Locke (*Essay on Human Understanding*) argued that social interaction is necessary for the preservation of society. Darwin's theory of evolution also has the concept of social adaptation for survival. Thus, social individual behaviour has been the subject of immense interest all along the ages. At no time, it is separate from his/her social context.

In this unit, the concept of social psychology is discussed in detail, along with its nature, goals and scope. The development of social psychology as a

subject of social science with special reference to India has also been analysed. The unit will highlight the relationship between sociology and anthropology.

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1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the nature and scope of social psychology
- Analyse the development of social psychology
- Discuss the history of social psychology in India
- Interpret the relationship between sociology and anthropology

1.2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

According to psychologist Gordon Allport, social psychology is a discipline which uses scientific methods 'to understand and explain how the thought, feeling and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of other human beings' (1985). Social psychology looks at a wide range of social topics, including group behaviour, social perception, leadership, non-verbal behaviour, conformity, aggression and prejudice. It is important to observe that social psychology is not just about looking at social influences. Social perception and social interaction are also vital to understanding social behaviour.

The goal of social psychology is to understand cognition and behaviour as they naturally occur in a social context, but the very act of observing people can influence and alter their behaviour. For this reason, many social psychology experiments utilize deception to conceal or distort certain aspects of the study. Deception may include false cover stories, false participants (known as confederates or stooges), and false feedback given to the participants, and so on.

The practice of deception has been challenged by some psychologists who maintain that deception under any circumstance is unethical, and that other research strategies (for example, role-playing) should be used instead. Unfortunately, research has shown that role-playing studies do not produce the same results as deception studies and this has cast doubt on their validity. In addition to deception, experimenters have at times put people into potentially uncomfortable or embarrassing situations (for example, the Milgram experiment, Stanford prison experiment), and this has also been criticized for ethical reasons.

To protect the rights and well-being of research participants, and at the same time discover meaningful results and insights into human behaviour,

virtually all social psychology research must pass an ethical review process. At most colleges and universities, it is conducted by an ethics committee or institutional review board. This group examines the proposed research to make sure that no harm is done to the participants, and that the benefits of the study outweigh any possible risks or discomforts to people taking part in the study.

Furthermore, a process of informed consent is often used to make sure that volunteers know what will happen in the experiment and understand that they are allowed to quit the experiment at any time. A debriefing is typically done at the conclusion of the experiment in order to reveal any deceptions used and generally make sure that the participants are unharmed by the procedures. In the existing times, most of the research in social psychology involves no more risk of harm than can be expected from routine psychological testing or normal daily activities.

1.2.1 Scope of Social Psychology

An underlying assumption in the development of social psychology has been the belief that some aspects of human nature are the same in all cultures and across history. So, although one wants to understand the extent to which our behaviour changes in different social and cultural context, one is also fairly confident that there are some important and basic aspects of human nature which are not affected by changes in social circumstances. Indeed, if there were no common bases for comparison, differences and similarities across cultures could not be assessed at all. It implies that social psychologists are interested in variations in social reactions and their origins and in the consistency or predictability of human behaviour. In the twenty-five years after World War II, social psychology continued to be an actively growing field of scientific enquiry. Attention continued to be focused on the influence of groups and group membership on individual behaviour, but the field expanded into virtually every area of social interaction. In the introduction to the very influential *Handbook of Social Psychology* published shortly after World War II, Gordon Allport (1954) argued strongly that one can improve his or her social welfare via the systematic application of social science and, in particular, social psychology. This optimistic view of social psychology is held even more strongly today. The 1954 edition of the *Handbook of Social Psychology* also assigned great importance to the role of methodology in the complex field of social psychology, and development of research methods in this area is still continuing today.

In the last twenty-five years, the development of social psychology has continued with the addition of new areas of research such as attribution—how one infer the causes of behaviour of others and of ourselves—the study of gender roles and gender-role stereotyping and the study of helping or pro-social behaviour. There are primarily two themes which lays the basis

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for the recent developments in social psychology. The first has been an increasing emphasis on using our knowledge of cognitive processing to understand the complexities of social phenomena. The second discernable trend is an increasing interest among social psychologists in analysing current social problems and applying their knowledge to practical issues, such as organizations and workplace settings. These trends reflect an increasing awareness of the need to draw on our knowledge of basic psychological theory and research in order to help understand the complexities of our social world.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the social subjects covered in the field of social psychology?
2. State the goal of social psychology.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Other people are central to our lives because we are in a social relationship with them. The presence of others may be real (for example, when one is present in a classroom, party, house or so on.) or imagined (one may think of his or her friend would feel about not being invited to the housewarming ceremony). So, one of the definition of social psychology is that it is the scientific study of the nature and causes of individual behaviour in a social situation. The term 'behaviour' includes thoughts and feelings. Social psychology is the study of social behaviour and the mental experience of people in social contexts. Many authorities view it as occupying the area between sociology on the one hand and individual psychology on the other. It includes the study of social interaction and communication, both verbal and non-verbal, behaviour in groups, social attitudes and persuasion, interpersonal attraction and social relationships, leadership and social influence, aggression and anger, altruism and helping behaviour, attribution and social cognition, bargaining and negotiation, conformity and social influence processes, cooperation and competition, group decision-making, group dynamics, leadership and group performance, obedience to authority, prejudice and inter-group conflict, self-presentation and impression management, sex roles, sexual behaviour, social learning and socialization.

The beginning of social psychology is often regarded as 1908, when two influential early texts by McDougall (a psychologist) and Ross (a sociologist) were published, but the field did not really evolve a separate identity of its own until the mid-1930s and did not gain momentum until after World War II. The early development of social psychology was dominated by theories and research generated in the United States, although many of the most influential pioneers, including Fritz Heider and Kurt Lewin, were

emigrants from Europe. After the foundation of the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology in 1967, pressure began to build towards reducing the global dominance of American social psychology. European social psychology has maintained the American tradition of experimental research, but has also tended to give more prominence to non-experimental approaches, such as discourse analysis, social representations research and various qualitative methods.

World War II and its Impact

After a decade of little progress, World War II and later part showed growth in several directions. The role of group membership and its influence on individual behaviour, personality traits and social behaviour was explored. The cognitive dissonance theory developed by Leon Festinger, an American psychologist (1957) was another landmark. The theory focused on how human beings disliked inconsistency between their attitudes and behaviour and proposed that there was a motivation to reduce it. This opened up a significant research area. This gave impetus to the study of social attraction, pro-social or helping behaviour, social perception, stereotypes and a host of other related topics. Such types of research led to the growth of the applied field in social psychology. Areas like health, organizations, legal process and environmental issues were studied in terms of the individual in these contexts.

Looking to the future it becomes clear that issues like ethnicity, migration, conflicts, catastrophes (natural and otherwise), population, effects of technology, and so on would gain a lot of importance. The essence of the focus is bound to be the contextualization of social behaviour aimed at human welfare.

The Link of Social Psychology To Psychology

The emergence of social psychology was very gradual. So, no clear markers are identifiable. As mentioned, the earliest use of the term social psychology is credited to psychologist, William McDougall (1908), who published a book titled, *Introduction to Psychology* based on the notion of instincts. This view does not enjoy much currency in modern times. The second recorded evidence is a book written by an American psychologist, F H Allport (1924), called *Social Psychology*. He proposed that social behaviour arises from several factors including the presence of others and their actions. This view is much closer to present day interpretation.

These were followed by the definitive studies of two psychologist pioneers, Mazafer Sherif and Kurt Lewin. Sherif (1935) studied social norms by which any group rules were developed for managing a set of individuals. Psychologists, Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) studied leadership and group processes. This marked the beginning of the systematic scientific study of social psychology.

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Origins of Social Psychology

The word 'social' has been traced to the Sanskrit word 'sacati' which means 'follows' or 'accompanies'. This is also related to the Latin term 'socialis'. The Greek and the Roman languages also have 'sharing' as one of the concepts associated with social.

Aristotle in his treatise on politics indicated an instinctual basis for man's social interactions in society. These linguistic explorations speak about the recognition of social interactions as the main stay of human existence.

1.3.1 History of Social Psychology in India

India has a rich history in analysing and interpreting social relationships. It can be traced to the Vedic and post-Vedic literature, that is, to the period of 1500 B.C. At the centre of this rich tradition is the concept of dharma. Dharma means 'proper action', 'moral duty', and 'law of human nature'. The concept of dharma has greatly influenced ways of thinking, perceiving and categorizing experiences. According to the author and psychologist, Sudhir Kakar, 'In its social implication, dharma is an inherent force in human being which holds the individual and society together, or going one step further, the force which makes 'individual and society hold each other together'. Another critical aspect of Indian culture is the indivisibility of cosmic and material self, of person and nature, and of person and society. Here, the self is considered to be integral to the all-pervasive cosmic reality. Such ancient and classical Indian social theories pervaded throughout Indian history without being much influenced by the West until the time of the British Raj.

During the British Raj, modern social psychology had a beginning in the establishment of the first psychology department at the Calcutta University. After India's Independence, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru considered adoption of Western science and technology as a solution for rapid socio-economic growth of the country. Therefore, wholesale import of Western science started, from which psychology in India did not remain unaffected. In the later years, Indian social psychologists continued working in the areas of prejudice, stereotypes and social attitudes. Large scale surveys were conducted which took different attitude measures. Sociologist, Adinarayan conducted studies on racial and communal attitudes (1953) and on caste attitudes (1958). This line of research was followed by various sociologists, Rath and Sircar (1960), Anant (1970), and others.

1.3.2 Relationship with Sociology and Anthropology

Since social psychology focuses on the study of the individual in the social context of other individuals, sociologists study the individual as a member of a social group—the society. Anthropologists look into the genesis of the human being in a larger ethnic/cultural context. The main difference between

the two social sciences is that sociology concentrates on society whereas anthropology focuses on the culture.

In the existing times, the relationship between sociology and anthropology is widely recognized. In fact, anthropologist Alfred Kroeber pointed out that the two-sciences are twin sisters. An American anthropologist, Robert Redfied believed that the relations between sociology and anthropology are closer than those between anthropology and political science, which is partly due to greater similarity in ways of work.

Economists examine the individual's economic/commercial behaviour in the context of monetary/economic factors. Marketing people are keen on studying consumer behaviour of an individual in terms of business/buying behaviour. Political scientists seek to study human political behaviour in the context of leadership, governance and international relations. These show that such disciplines are related, but their perspectives differ. Also, the basic principles as gained from research in the field of psychology have become the backbone for their applications in the allied fields involving human behaviour.

Check Your Progress

3. How is sociology different from anthropology?
4. State one of the critical aspects of Indian culture.

1.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Social psychology looks at a wide range of social topics, including group behaviour, social perception, leadership, non-verbal behaviour, conformity, aggression and prejudice.
2. The goal of social psychology is to understand cognition and behaviour as they naturally occur in a social context, but the very act of observing people can influence and alter their behaviour.
3. Sociology is different from anthropology as it concentrates on society whereas anthropology focuses on the culture.
4. One of the critical aspects of Indian culture is the indivisibility of cosmic and material self, of person and nature, and of person and society. Here, the self is considered to be integral to the all-pervasive cosmic reality.

1.5 SUMMARY

- According to psychologist Gordon Allport, social psychology is a discipline which uses scientific methods 'to understand and explain

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how the thought, feeling and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of other human beings'.

- Social psychology looks at a wide range of social topics, including group behaviour, social perception, leadership, non-verbal behaviour, conformity, aggression and prejudice.
- Social perception and social interaction are vital to understanding social behaviour.
- The goal of social psychology is to understand cognition and behaviour as they naturally occur in a social context, but the very act of observing people can influence and alter their behaviour.
- The practice of deception has been challenged by some psychologists who maintain that deception under any circumstance is unethical, and that other research strategies (for example, role-playing) should be used instead.
- To protect the rights and well-being of research participants, and at the same time discover meaningful results and insights into human behaviour, virtually all social psychology research must pass an ethical review process.
- An underlying assumption in the development of social psychology has been the belief that some aspects of human nature are the same in all cultures and across history.
- Social psychologists are interested in variations in social reactions and their origins and in the consistency or predictability of human behaviour.
- In the twenty-five years after World War II, social psychology continued to be an actively growing field of scientific enquiry.
- In the last twenty-five years, the development of social psychology has continued with the addition of new areas of research such as attribution—how one infer the causes of behaviour of others and of ourselves—the study of gender roles and gender-role stereotyping and the study of helping or pro-social behaviour.
- The term 'behaviour' includes thoughts and feelings. Social psychology is the study of social behaviour and the mental experience of people in social contexts.
- The early development of social psychology was dominated by theories and research generated in the United States, although many of the most influential pioneers, including Fritz Heider and Kurt Lewin, were emigrants from Europe.
- The role of group membership and its influence on individual behaviour, personality traits and social behaviour was explored.

- The cognitive dissonance theory focused on how human beings disliked inconsistency between their attitudes and behaviour and proposed that there was a motivation to reduce it. This opened up a significant research area.
- Aristotle in his treatise on politics indicated an instinctual basis for man's social interactions in society.
- The concept of dharma in India has greatly influenced ways of thinking, perceiving and categorizing experiences.
- During the British Raj, modern social psychology had a beginning in the establishment of the first psychology department at the Calcutta University.
- Since social psychology focuses on the study of the individual in the social context of other individuals, sociologists study the individual as a member of a social group—the society.
- Anthropologists look into the genesis of the human being in a larger ethnic/cultural context.
- The main difference between the two social sciences is that sociology concentrates on society whereas anthropology focuses on the culture.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Anthropology:** It refers to the study of humans and their behaviour and societies in the past and present.
- **Sociology:** It refers to the scientific study of society, social interaction, patterns of social relationships and the culture.
- **Social Psychology:** It refers to the study of social behaviour and the mental experience of people in social contexts.
- **Social Perception:** It refers to the study related to formation of perception by people and the inferences which they make about other people as sovereign personalities.

1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is deception criticized in the field of social psychology?
2. What are the two main themes related to the development of social psychology?

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3. Write a short note on the development of social psychology after World War II.
4. How has the concept of dharma influenced the way of thinking in India?
5. What is the relationship between sociology and anthropology?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the nature and scope of social psychology.
2. Analyse the development of social psychology in India.
3. Explain the link between social psychology and psychology.
4. Discuss the contribution of Gordon Allport in the field of social psychology.
5. 'Social perception and social interaction are also vital to understanding social behaviour'. Elucidate the statement.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS

Lindgren, H C. 1973. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited.

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UNIT 2 BASIC CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

NOTES

Structure

2.0 Introduction
2.1 Objectives
2.2 Definition and Scope of Social Psychology
  2.2.1 Social Psychology and Related Disciplines
  2.2.2 Individual, Society and Culture
  2.2.3 Social Psychology in the New Millennium
2.3 Research Methods in Social Psychology
  2.3.1 Types of Research Methods
2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
2.5 Summary
2.6 Key Words
2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
2.8 Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Social psychology is the study which deals with the social interactions and the effect of these interactions on individuals. It focuses on various factors which helps to analyse the way in a person behaves or performs certain actions. It thus, deals with the way in which a person's thoughts, feelings and beliefs are moulded in the presence of a society.

Individual, society and culture can be recognised as the disciplines of social psychology. These disciplines help psychologists to analyse the character of an individual. Individuality helps psychologists to understand the way in which an individual behaves; society forms the character of the person according to set standards and culture helps to mould the personality of an individual and how he or she forms their opinions. There are various research methods which help to analyse the way an individual behaves.

In this unit, the definition of social psychology and its disciplines have been explained. The role of social psychology in the new millennium has also been analysed. The various research methods related to social psychology have been explained in detail.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and disciplines of social psychology

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- Explain the concept of individual, society and culture in social psychology
- Analyse the importance of social psychology in the existing times
- Discuss the various types of research methods
- Analyse the procedure of scientific research method

2.2 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social psychology is defined as the study of social behaviour and the mental experience of people in the social context. It is also viewed by many authorities as 'occupying the area between sociology on the one hand and individual psychology on the other.' Thus, it is the scientific study which focuses on how people's feelings, thoughts and their behaviour is influenced by the presence of others.

William McDougall, a renowned psychologist has opined that 'given the native propensities and capacities of the individual human mind, all the complex mental life of societies is shaped by them and in turn reacts upon the courses of their development and operation in the individual'. However, he does not consider that the study of the 'native propensities and capacities of the individual human mind is properly a part of social psychology but is "an indispensable preliminary to all social psychology"'.

Social psychology helps to understand the knowledge of a given society by discussing an individual's feelings, beliefs, purpose and having established themselves among other people and thus, have formed groups of their own based on these characteristics. It therefore, aims at enlarging our knowledge of the individual by giving an idea about his or her choices from their social surroundings.

2.2.1 Social Psychology and Related Disciplines

Social psychology is often confused with folk wisdom, personality psychology, and sociology. What makes social psychology different? Unlike folk wisdom, which relies on anecdotal observations and subjective interpretation, social psychology employs scientific methods and empirical study of social phenomena. While personality psychology focuses on individual traits, characteristics, and thoughts, social psychology is focused on situations. Social psychologists are interested in the impact that social environment and interaction has on attitudes and behaviour. While there are many similarities between social psychology and sociology, sociology tends to view social behaviour and influences at a very broad-based level. Sociologists focus on institutions and culture that influences social psychology. Psychologists, instead, are interested in situational variables that affect social behaviour.

While psychology and sociology both study similar topics, they look at these topics from different perspectives.

2.2.2 Individual, Society and Culture

We will in this section discuss the concepts of individual, social and culture.

Individual

Social psychology is about understanding individual behaviour in a social context. It therefore, looks at human behaviour which is influenced by other people and the social context in which it occurs. In this field, the concept of the individual plays a vital role. The term individual can also be called as 'self-concept'. It is a general term which is used to refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates or perceives themselves. To be aware of oneself is to have a concept of oneself. According to a social psychologist, Roy F Baumeister, self-concept means 'the individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is.'

Society and Culture

Another important dimension in social psychology is the study of how attitudes, beliefs, decisions are moulded by social influence, that is, an individual's immediate surroundings, as well as the larger culture and society. Society helps to analyse the behaviour of a person with respect to its surroundings. A society forms the personality of an individual and thus, forms an important part in social psychology. Culture essentially means the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. It is transmitted from one generation to the other. An individual's grooming, language, dress sense, belief system is moulded by the culture of the society. Hence, culture plays a big role in determining how an individual behaves in any given environment.

2.2.3 Social Psychology in the New Millennium

There has been a tremendous growth and change in the field of social psychology in recent times. These changes echo the speedy growth found in every area of human life. The primary focus of research in the field of social psychology since the new millennium has been the cognitive perspective, application perspective, multicultural perspective and evolutionary perspective.

In terms of the cognitive perspective, social psychologists are trying to apply the basic knowledge about memory, reasoning, and decision making to different aspects of social behaviour. For example, researchers have tried to ascertain the role between prejudice and basic cognitive processes. In terms of the multicultural perspective, researchers have tried to observe how the rate of culture and human diversity affect social behaviour and thought. In terms of

the evolutionary perspective, an important trend among social psychologists has been to see how biological and evolutionary factors influence different aspects of social behaviour. In terms of the application perspective, a growing number of social psychologists nowadays try to apply the knowledge of social psychology to questions on personal health, behaviour in work settings, environmental issues, and so on.

Check Your Progress

1. How is social psychology different from folk wisdom?
2. What is the cognitive perspective of social psychology?

2.3 RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Valid knowledge is obtained through scientific investigation. This implies that methods for obtaining knowledge have to be thorough and systematic. Empirical research leads to theory building. Theories form the framework for understanding any phenomenon. The starting point of all research is common sense. In order to establish the truth behind common sense, the scientific method is used. Every scientific method is based on robust data or evidence, accurate measurement and description, and controlled observation and repeatable results.

Some of the common objectives of research methods in social psychology are as follows:

- To achieve new insights into phenomena that lead to exploratory and formative research endeavours
- To carry out descriptive studies
- To carry out diagnostic studies
- To carry out hypothesis-testing (research studies)

2.3.1 Types of Research Methods

In this section, we will discuss the different types of research methods.

Survey

A survey is defined as a collection tool which is used to collect information about individuals. They are the most common method especially in case of psychology research. They are used for gathering information related to self-report data. It may aim at collecting factual information or the opinion of them regarding the survey which may have been carried out.

Surveys help researchers to collect a variety of information in a quick way. It can be used to collect information related to individual's characteristics

such as their age, religion, ethnicity or income and so on. Surveys can also be used to collect information related to people's experience, hypothetical scenarios and opinions. Surveys can also be conducted in a number of ways through mail, telephone or survey forms can be given to people while they are in a mall or in a market.

Descriptive versus analytical

Descriptive research involves obtaining facts through surveys and other procedures. This is to understand things as they stand. Analytical research uses the data or facts already existing to make critical evaluations for the purpose of knowledge.

Applied versus fundamental

Applied research has an action orientation. In this type of method, the aim is to find a solution for an existing problem. The problem can be in the area of business, government, education, or society. In fundamental research, also called basic research, the focus is on knowledge for its own sake. This is also called 'pure' research, which is engaged in theory building. It is aimed at gathering information to advance 'scientific knowledge'.

Quantitative versus qualitative research

Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount**.** It relates to those factors or phenomena that are quantifiable; for example, weight and loudness. Qualitative research is concerned with discovering the underlying factors that govern behaviour; for example, motivation and anxiety. This type of research is very important in the social and behavioural sciences. Qualitative research utilizes experimental data for valid extensions.

Conceptual versus empirical research

Conceptual research involves study of some theory or concepts. This helps in understanding new concepts or reinterpreting existing ones. Empirical research relies on observations or data for system or theory building. This is data-based research. It is a form of experimental type of research. It aims to obtain facts first. All the steps needed to generate data are used here. Evidence obtained from empirical research is viewed as the most powerful of supports for any attempt at knowledge gathering. Research methods used in social psychology fall under the following two categories:

(i) Experimental method: Experimental method is a formal systematic test of a fact or principle. It is the most powerful research tool available. It is carried out under strict conditions. An experiment is a situation where cause and effect are tested or measured. Procedures involved in an experiment include the following:

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(a) Directly varying a condition that you think might cause a change in the effect (behaviour).

(b) Create two comparable groups and these groups should be alike in all aspects except the condition that is being varied.

(c) Record whether the varying condition has any effect on the behaviour observed; for example, study to find out if hunger affects memory. Let us conduct an experiment to understand it better.

Experiment 2.1 Form two groups, as follows: Group 1 is starved for a given length of time and then given a test of memory. Group 2 is given a satisfactory meal and then given the same test of memory. Group 1 is called the experimental group. Group 2 is called the control group. The experimental group has received the experimental or independent variable. This condition is intentionally varied. A variable is any condition that can change and that might affect the outcome of an experiment. The control group does not receive the experimental variable. A control group provides a point of reference for comparing the measures or scores with the experimental group. This comparison enables one to determine whether the experimental variable has had an effect or not. There are three types of variables in an experiment involving cause and effect that are as follows:

(a) Independent variable: Independent variable is a condition that is altered or varied by the experimenter. It is under the control of the experimenter. The experimenter sets the size, amount or value of the independent variable. Independent variables are thought to cause differences in behaviour.

(b) Dependent variable: Dependent variable measures the results of the independent variable that has been introduced.

(c) Extraneous variables: Extraneous variables are conditions that exist in any experiment, that are not being manipulated or varied, and most researchers wish to prevent its presence from affecting the outcome of the experiment. Sometimes, these variables cannot be controlled because of the inherent nature of psychological research. To this extent, the outcome would contain some amount of contamination. This reduces the power of the conclusions drawn. This variance is attempted to be controlled by methodological procedures.

The decision whether or not the independent variable made a difference is subjected to statistical determination. If it is 'statistically significant, it means that the results obtained would occur very rarely by chance alone. To be statistically significant, a difference must be large enough so that it would occur by chance in less than five experiments out of 100'. Further research findings become stronger if they can be duplicated or repeated.

(ii) **Correlational method:** Correlational method seeks to examine the degree of relationship between two events or behaviour. Let us consider the relationship between crime and poverty, or physical attractiveness and social popularity. Correlational studies can be carried out in a lab or in a natural setting. To begin with, the factors of interest are measured. A statistical procedure is then applied to determine the nature and degree of correlation. The strength of a relationship is expressed as the coefficient of correlation. This is simply a number falling anywhere between +1.00 and –1.00. If the number is zero or close to zero, the association between the two measures is weak or non-existent. For example, the correlation between size of clothes and intelligence is zero. If the correlation is +1.00, then a perfect relationship is thought to exist. If the number is –1.00, then a perfect negative relationship is discovered. A positive correlation means that increases in one measure are matched by increases in the other or a decrease in one corresponds with a decrease in the other. A negative relationship implies that increase in one measure corresponds to decrease in the other. They are further discussed as follows:

(a) **Positive correlation:** In pre-adolescents, as height increases, weight gains are also seen.

(b) **Negative correlation:** As the hours of television viewing increase each day, there is a lowering of grades as compared to those students who watch less TV (other things being constant or similar). One must, however, be forewarned about using correlation statistics to arrive at spurious associations; for example, the amount of ice-cream eaten in America and the poverty levels in India. Perhaps, this could yield a positive correlation, but it is surely absurd in terms of meaningfulness of the association. The most significant advantage of the correlational method is in terms of its usefulness to study events in real-life settings. This is more so because several psychological experiments cannot be carried out in real life owing to practical and ethical constraints. Causal connection and correlational connections are the two important techniques used in the study of psychology. Social psychology extends these methods into its realm as well, with great benefits.

Experimenter Bias/Effect

Experimenters are human beings with various set prejudices and expectations. So, when they evaluate, some of these may contaminate the findings, inadvertently. For example, teachers are told about the new students who are promoted from their earlier class, as to what their performances were in the various years. Even as these teachers carry out their own evaluations in the courses that they teach, some of the biases of what they had heard do come

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to influence their current evaluation. This implies that even the most careful and objective evaluations suffer from the earlier biases gathered from various sources. This shows the importance of objectivity, fairness and dispassionate attitude towards any form of measurement as crucial for reliable outcomes.

For instance, if one feels unwell and visits the doctor, he or she tends to feel a lot better after they walk out of the clinic even before the medication has had time to act on the body. This is the effect of the doctor's attention and the decision to take care of one's health problem. Similarly, in psychological research also, the presence of an experimenter or the fact that a particular set of people have been selected to participate in a study, creates some special feelings in the subjects that their responses are not as true to what would have been registered, in their natural settings; for example, if one were to measure the effect of different types of music on the human system and one looked up to various monitors and instruments it would invariably alter the reactions. This is due to the following reasons:

- One is conscious of being evaluated.
- Subtly, one is aware of the possible kind of reactions that one is expected to have; for example, in sad music, all systems lowered, in happy music all system raised. All these are effects of the situations and measurement.

Other Methods of Study

There are some other methods of study which are enlisted as follows:

- **Questionnaire:** In a questionnaire, a paper–pencil test that consists of questions that reveals aspects of a person's thoughts and traits, to a limited extent.
- **Rating scale:** In a rating scale, a list of personality traits or aspects of behaviour in a given situation is rated.
- **Behavioural assessment:** In a behavioural assessment involves recording the frequency of the occurrence of various types of behaviour. It can be done by a single evaluator or by several persons, at the same time and then the tally of all evaluations, obtained.
- **Situational test:** In a situational test, a real-life condition is simulated, so that the person's reactions can be directly observed and recorded, for example, anxiety before an impending interview or appearing before an audience to make a speech.
- **Structured interview:** In a structured interview, a prearranged series of planned questions aimed at understanding a given thought, feeling, or behaviour. The problem with all these instruments is by and large that of design. Another difficulty encountered is that of getting the subjects to cooperate and take the task seriously and answer genuinely. There are also the issues of giving socially acceptable responses.

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Scientific Research Method

The scientific research method involves the study of any phenomenon using logical methods. Here, the mind is trained in the process of logical thinking. This enables the systematic interlinking of facts. So, experimental observations could lead to accurate conclusions. These can be compared to possible outcomes in a clear manner. Thus, observed facts get linked to concepts in a rigorous way. So, new relationships among variables can be established and inferences drawn and conclusions made. Some of the basic postulates of the scientific method are as follows:

- It relies on empirical evidence.
- It is objective in its pursuit.
- It is interested in predictions.
- It is capable of being replicated.
- It has theory building as the ultimate goal.

Knowing how research is done and carrying out systematic research needs the understanding of the research process. The steps involved in research are as follows:

(i) Formulating the research problem: One relates to the problem or issue in hand; the other pertains to the relationship between variables — here the conceptual and theoretical background should be studied to identify the problem. Then the operational or analytical steps to be undertaken for studying the problem should be specified. Extensive survey of literature is suggested for this purpose. This should be followed by developing a working *hypothesis* required. A hypothesis limits the area of research within a given band of study; however, it enables better focus too. The hypothesis must be stated clearly and precisely. A specific hypothesis is the first step in the research process.

(ii) Designing the research: The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is to be conducted. The design would provide for data collection, categorization, and analysis of the information that is gathered in advance. The design can be experimental or non-experimental in nature. Research designs have to be prepared keeping the following in mind:

- The means for obtaining data
- The skills available for research
- The purpose of the study
- The time available for the research
- The cost factor involved

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(iii) **Determining the sample:** All inquiries involve a 'universe' or 'population'. When the entire population is included, it is called a census survey. But this is rarely possible and only a select few can be studied. This is technically known as a sample. Samples can be probability samples or non-probability samples. In a probability sample, each element has a known probability of being included in the sample. In a non-probability sample, this is not possible. Probability samples are based on simple random sampling. Systematic sampling stratified sampling, cluster or area sampling are other forms of sampling. Various forms of non-probability samples are convenience sampling, judgement sampling and quota sampling.

Some of the important sample designs are as follows:

(a) **Deliberate or purposive sampling:** It is a type of convenience sampling.

(b) **Simple or random sampling:** There is a chance that every element of the population is represented in the sample.

(c) **Systematic sampling:** Every tenth item or name is included in the sample.

(d) **Stratified sampling:** If the population in not homogenous then this procedure is useful in obtaining a representative sample. Here, the 'population is stratified into a number of non-overlapping sub-populations or strata and sample items are selected from each stratum'. First, there is stratification and then random sampling is done. So, it is also called stratified random sampling.

(e) **Quota sampling:** Here, the quota from different strata is selected to form the sample. The 'size of the quota is generally proportionate to the size of the stratum in the population. Quota samples are largely judgement samples, rather than random samples'.

(f) **Cluster or area sampling:** This involves grouping the population and then selecting the groups—clusters, rather than individual elements for inclusion in the sample.

For example, the number of women employees in the BPO industry in a company is 15,000. The sample size is kept to 450. Then these 15,000 employees could be formed into 100 clusters of 150 each. Five of these clusters can then be selected to be the random sample. Similarly, area sampling is done using geographical regions.

(g) **Multi-stage sampling:** This is useful for large areas like a country or region. The first stage is to select a large primary area (a state) then districts, towns and finally some households. The technique

of random sample is applied at all stages. This is known as multi-stage random sampling. The sample design to be adopted must be decided by the nature of the inquiry and the other needs and constraints that exist in a context.

(iv) Collecting data: 'Data can be of two types—primary and secondary data'. Primary data is more robust as compared to secondary. But when primary data collection is not possible, then other data sources are used. Primary data is collected by the following methods:

- Observation
- Interview
- Telephone interview
- Mailed questionnaires
- Schedules—containing relevant questions

Any one of these methods can be used for obtaining data. If the study is carried out according to the predetermined lines of the design and sample, then the data collected would be usable for further analysis.

(v) Analysis of data: Analysis of data can be done with the help of coding, tabulating and then sorting out the data suitably.

(vi) Statistical treatment: Statistical treatment is the application of statistical procedures to the data, to determine whether the hypothesis should be rejected or accepted.

(vii) Generalizations and interpretations: The conclusions and the ability to apply the findings, widely, complete the research process. List of charts, graphs and so on could be included.

(viii) Report preparation: A report of the research must be presented under the following heads:

- Introduction (the objective of the research or the hypothesis tested)
- The methods/tools used
- The sample size and method of sample selection
- The conduction of the study (with the variables involved)
- The statistics applied
- The findings, conclusions and applications
- Suggestions and limitations of the study
- References

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Check Your Progress

3. What is statistical treatment?
4. How is primary data collected?
5. What does the correlational method seeks to examine?
6. List the various forms of non-probability samples.

2.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Social psychology is different from folk wisdom because social psychology employs scientific methods and empirical study of social phenomena. On the other hand, folk wisdom relies on anecdotal observations and subjective interpretation.
2. The cognitive perspective of social psychology implies that social psychologists are trying to apply the basic knowledge about memory, reasoning, and decision making to different aspects of social behaviour. For example, researchers have tried to ascertain the role between prejudice and basic cognitive processes.
3. Statistical treatment is the application of statistical procedures to the data, to determine whether the hypothesis should be rejected or accepted.
4. Primary data can be collected through observation, interview, telephone interview, mailed questionnaires and schedules which contains relevant questions.
5. Correlational method seeks to examine the degree of relationship between two events or behaviour.
6. The various forms of non-probability samples are convenience sampling, judgement sampling and quota sampling.

2.5 SUMMARY

- Social psychology is defined as the study of social behaviour and the mental experience of people in the social context.
- Social psychology is often confused with folk wisdom, personality psychology, and sociology.
- Social psychologists are interested in the impact that social environment and interaction has on attitudes and behaviour.

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- Social psychology is about understanding individual behaviour in a social context. It therefore, looks at human behaviour which is influenced by other people and the social context in which it occurs.
- An important dimension in social psychology is the study of how attitudes, beliefs, decisions are moulded by social influence, that is, an individual's immediate surroundings, as well as the larger culture and society.
- Culture essentially means the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
- The primary focus of research in the field of social psychology since the new millennium has been the cognitive perspective, application perspective, multicultural perspective and evolutionary perspective.
- Valid knowledge is obtained through scientific investigation. This implies that methods for obtaining knowledge have to be thorough and systematic.
- Theories form the framework for understanding any phenomenon. The starting point of all research is common sense.
- Every scientific method is based on robust data or evidence, accurate measurement and description, and controlled observation and repeatable results.
- A survey is defined as a collection tool which is used to collect information about individuals.
- Applied research has an action orientation. In this type of method, the aim is to find a solution for an existing problem.
- Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount**.** It relates to those factors or phenomena that are quantifiable; for example, weight and loudness.
- Conceptual research involves study of some theory or concepts. This helps in understanding new concepts or reinterpreting existing ones.
- Experimental method is a formal systematic test of a fact or principle. It is the most powerful research tool available.
- Correlational method seeks to examine the degree of relationship between two events or behaviour.
- Experimenters are human beings with various set prejudices and expectations. So, when they evaluate, some of these may contaminate the findings, inadvertently.
- The scientific research method involves the study of any phenomenon using logical methods.

- The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is to be conducted.
- All inquiries involve a 'universe' or 'population'. When the entire population is included, it is called a census survey.
- The technique of random sample is applied at all stages. This is known as multi-stage random sampling.
- Analysis of data can be done with the help of coding, tabulating and then sorting out the data suitably.
- Statistical treatment is the application of statistical procedures to the data, to determine whether the hypothesis should be rejected or accepted.
- The conclusions and the ability to apply the findings, widely, complete the research process.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Behavioural Assessment:** It refers to an assessment which involves recording the frequency of the occurrence of various types of behaviour.
- **Conceptual Research:** It refers to a research which involves study of some theory or concepts. It helps in understanding new concepts or reinterpreting existing ones.
- **Scientific Research:** It refers to the method which involves the study of any phenomenon using logical methods.
- **Structured Interview:** It refers to a prearranged series of planned questions aimed at understanding a given thought, feeling, or behaviour.
- **Survey:** It refers to a collection tool which is used to collect information about individuals.
- **Variable:** It refers to any condition that can change and that might affect the outcome of an experiment.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the objectives of research methods?
2. Write a short note on the disciplines of social psychology.
3. What is a survey?
4. State the three main types of variables in an experiment.

5. What is a situational test?
6. List the basic postulates of scientific method.

Long Answer Questions

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1. Discuss the role of social psychology in the new millennium.
2. 'Valid knowledge is obtained through scientific investigation'. Explain the statement.
3. Analyse any two main types of research methods.
4. Discuss the procedure of experimental method.
5. Differentiate between positive and negative correlational method.
6. Discuss the steps of scientific research method.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 BRIEF HISTORY OF SOCIAL PYSCHOLOGY

Structure

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Objectives
3.2 Scope of Social Pyschology
  3.2.1 Levels of Social Behaviour
3.3 Aproaches Towards Understanding Social Behaviour
3.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
3.5 Summary
3.6 Key Words
3.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
3.8 Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Social behaviour refers to a field of psychology which helps to analyse behaviours related to how one communicates with other people. It also discusses how an individual is influenced by his or her culture, ethics, attitudes and genetics. Its history goes back to the 1940s.

It is necessary to understand the social behaviour as it forms a crucial part in the field of social psychology. It helps us to analyse our feelings and thoughts and the way in which we behave in a given social situation.

In this unit, the concept of social behaviour and its levels have been highlighted. The approaches related to social behaviour and the causes of social behaviour have been discussed in detail. The steps related to perspective taking have also been dealt in this unit.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the scope of social psychology
- Interpret the levels of social behaviour
- Discuss the approaches related towards understanding social behaviour
- Analyse the concept of the four steps of perspective taking

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3.2 SCOPE OF SOCIAL PYSCHOLOGY

We have already discussed the scope of social psychology in the previous units. To recapitulate here briefly, social psychology attempts to understand, explain, predict and, when needed, change people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Thinkers such as Lewin, Asch, Kelley and Festinger began groundwork in the discipline of social psychology in the 1940s and 1950s, but it was only in the late 1960s that social psychology came of age. Since then it has blossomed, both in investigating the basics of the discipline and in applying the insights from fundamental social psychology to different fields related to the area.

3.2.1 Levels of Social Behaviour

Social behaviour defines the way in which one interacts with other fellow beings in the society. Our responses to the people and the environment around us are determined to a great level by our psychological condition. The levels of social behaviour vary from person to person and due to various factors. Some of the characteristics which dictate the way we behave in a society are as follows:

- **Genes:** Genes play a big role in determining the way one behaves towards others. Our genetic psychological factors are powerful forces that make us do what we do and it does not change along with time. The world around us is rapidly changing. The genetic factors are not helpful as they cause problems because they offer psychological directions that may not be suitable in today's changing society.
- **Memes:** Memes are quite different from genes. While genetic factors remain the same and have evolved over many centuries, memes can evolve within a very short period without any chance for correction. They can evolve based on an idea or behaviour that spreads in a society, limited information and often ignorance.
- **Selfishness and altruism:** Many of the decisions that one takes are based on self-interests. Though self-interest is the primary drive that dictates the actions of a human being, there are people whose actions are purely based on helping others without any selfish motives or thought of personal reward. However, some are of the opinion that the people carrying out such altruistic actions can also be called selfish as the person doing the deed feels good. Not only an individual action but also a collective activity can also be termed as selfish or altruistic. Social scientists state that while our genes will always make us look for our own interests, individuals can be taught to be considerate towards the feelings of others.

3.3 APROACHES TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

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Understanding the causes of social behaviour forms the centerpiece of social psychology. It implies identifying those factors that shape our feelings, thoughts and behaviour, in social situations (refer Figure 3.1).

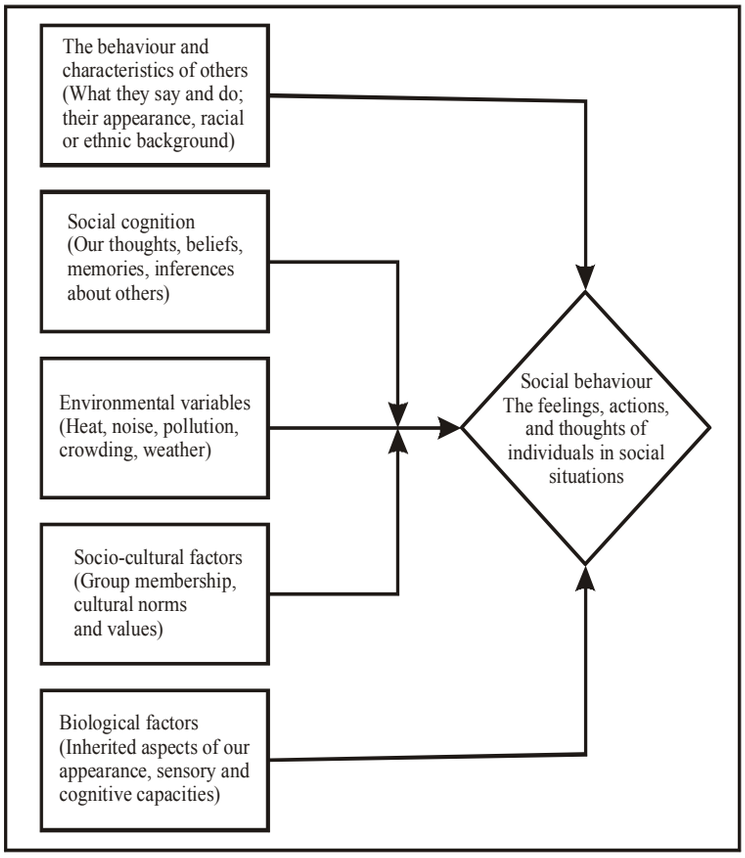

Fig. 3.1 *Understanding Social Behaviour*

Social behaviour: A summary of its major causes

Social behaviour is made up of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour which stems from several causes. The following points explain Figure 3.1 better:

- Box 1: How would our feelings, thoughts and behaviour be affected when one is introduced to a person who is attractive, smart and pleasant, with a smile?
- Box 2: Someone jumps the queue while other person is law-abiding and waiting for his or her turn, patiently.

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- Box 3: Recall how irritated and unpleasant one was in routine interaction with others on a hot, sweaty/humid day in contrast to the cooler, comfortable times.
- Box 4: Remember how one relates better to those persons who share our cultural, linguistic and value orientations as compared with those, who are different in these respects.
- Box 5: Our own appearance, strengths and limitations in terms of our capabilities and other personal attributes that have a significant impact in terms of determining our social behaviour.

Social behaviour and social thoughts can be better understood from the following findings of a study about people with ASD (autism spectrum disorders). Our friends are people who make us feel good about ourselves. While this is a simple truth, creating these friendships is a complex process, especially for individuals with ASD, with their pervasive social learning challenges.

Another truth, one gleaned from years of working with high-functioning individuals with ASD and discussing their social desires with them, is that all persons on the autism spectrum want people to be friendly to them. They desire friendships and dislike having enemies. They are no different from neurotypical people in their desire to create and maintain healthy relations. The difference in is their brain's ability to negotiate the subtlety of keeping relations friendly.

Children and adults with ASD have difficulty in interpreting others' intended social messages. They also more frequently send 'mis-cues' to others about their own social intentions. Even many higher functioning students with Asperger Syndrome go unaware of how other people perceive them, and the unintentional message their social actions send. They may be oblivious to the fact that others see them as sullen and do not desire their friendship because they fail to initiate or respond to a social greeting.

It is important to break down these complex concepts into concrete, understandable steps. To begin with, let us understand when and where social thinking is involved. It is a common misconception, especially among students that social thinking is involved only in social interactions, such as hanging out with friends or playing a game. It takes much discussion for students to begin to realize that social thinking is active any time they share space with others, even if they are not in direct communication. How many of us move our shopping carts out of the way of a fellow shopper walking down the same aisle of a grocery store? That is social thinking.

Social thinking is active not just when one is in the company of others but any time we are thinking about others. When alone, does one not analyse past social interactions in our heads, wondering if the other person perceived our actions in the intended way? One makes a call or sends an e-mail to

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clarify a message or offer an apology when he or she realizes that one may have been misinterpreted, or that our actions were just plain wrong. This is again social thinking at work.

Social thinking dominates our overall thinking time in a day. One may use social thinking before, during and after a social encounter. Social thought helps us determine how best to shape our behaviour so that others have good thoughts about us in return. If our goal is to help our students become better social thinkers, simply teaching a social skill is not enough. One must also teach these students about the presence of other people's own minds and social thoughts.

A useful strategy with middle school and older students is to use 'The Four Steps of Perspective Taking'. These steps help students to recognize and consider the extent to which one thinks about others and adjust our behaviour even in the absence of intentional communication. We engage the following four steps in any social interaction:

(i) **Step 1:** As soon as two people share a common space, they have a thought about each other. I have a thought about you; you have a thought about me.

(ii) **Step 2:** I consider the other person's intentions and motives. If they seem suspicious, I will monitor the person more closely. The other person will also consider my intentions and motives.

(iii) **Step 3:** Each person considers what the other may be thinking about him. Is it positive, negative, neutral? Is there a history between us upon which we weigh these thoughts?

(iv) **Step 4:** I monitor and possibly modify my behaviour to keep the other person thinking about me the way I want them to think about me. They are doing the same for me.

These four steps happen within milliseconds and at an intuitive level, below our immediate consciousness. The first three steps involve social thought; behaviour is involved only in Step 4.

It should be kept in mind that this process is based on the basic assumption that all of us desire people to have reasonably nice thoughts about us, even when our encounters are brief. Embedded in this assumption is its opposite: one does not want people to have bad thoughts about us. It can be challenging for people with ASD to just perceive that others have different thoughts, let alone think that one has all good thoughts and weird thoughts about others. Most people with ASD never stop to consider that they, too, have bad thoughts about other people.

Many people appreciate the role that social memories play in day-to-day interaction. We all have social emotional memories of people based on how they make us think about them over time. Those people whose actions

plant 'normal' to 'good' thoughts in other people's minds are much more likely to be considered friendly and have higher chances of making friends than those who create a lot of weird thought memories in the minds of others. The reason one may go call a friend or co-worker to apologize for how our actions may have been interpreted is to foster better social memories about ourselves in their brain.

The Four Steps of Perspective Taking is at play any time one shares space with others, and is a requirement for any functioning. Even in a classroom, hidden rule of the classroom environment is that all students and teachers join in mutual social thought about the others in the class, and that each student is responsible to monitor and adjust his behaviour accordingly. A student who is not proficient in the four steps is usually considered to have a behaviour problem.

Check Your Progress

1. State one use of social thought.
2. Why are genes not useful in determining behaviour of an individual?
3. State the basis assumption of the four steps of perspective taking process.
4. What do you understand by the term 'social behaviour'?

3.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Social thought helps us determine how best to shape our behaviour so that others have good thoughts about us in return.
2. Genes are not helpful in determining the behaviour of an individual because they offer psychological directions that may not be suitable in today's changing society.
3. The basis assumption of the four steps of perspective taking process is that all of us desire people to have reasonably nice thoughts about us, even when our encounters are brief.
4. Social behaviour defines the way in which one interacts with other fellow beings in the society.

3.5 SUMMARY

- Social psychology attempts to understand, explain, predict and, when needed, change people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

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- Thinkers such as Lewin, Asch, Kelley and Festinger began groundwork in the discipline of social psychology in the 1940s and 1950s, but it was only in the late 1960s that social psychology came of age.
- Social behaviour defines the way in which one interacts with other fellow beings in the society.
- Our genetic psychological factors are powerful forces that make us do what we do and it does not change along with time.
- While genetic factors remain the same and have evolved over many centuries, memes can evolve within a very short period without any chance for correction.
- Though self-interest is the primary drive that dictates the actions of a human being, there are people whose actions are purely based on helping others without any selfish motives or thought of personal reward.
- Understanding the causes of social behaviour forms the centerpiece of social psychology. It implies identifying those factors that shape our feelings, thoughts and behaviour, in social situations.
- Social behaviour is made up of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour which stems from several causes.
- Children and adults with ASD have difficulty in interpreting others' intended social messages.
- Social thinking is active not just when one is in the company of others but any time we are thinking about others.
- Social thinking dominates our overall thinking time in a day. One may use social thinking before, during and after a social encounter.
- Social thought helps us determine how best to shape our behaviour so that others have good thoughts about us in return.
- The Four Steps of Perspective Taking help students to recognize and consider the extent to which one thinks about others and adjust our behaviour even in the absence of intentional communication.
- It can be challenging for people with ASD to just perceive that others have different thoughts, let alone think that one has all good thoughts and weird thoughts about others.
- *The Four Steps of Perspective Taking* is at play any time one shares space with others, and is a requirement for any functioning.
- A student who is not proficient in the four steps is usually considered to have a behaviour problem.

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3.6 KEY WORDS

- **Altruism:** It refers to the way in which an individual shows selfless concern for the well-being of others.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** It refers to a neurological and developmental disorder which affects how a person acts and interacts with others.
- **Social Behaviour:** It refers to the way in which one interacts with other fellow beings in the society.
- **Social Thought:** It refers to a skill which helps an individual to determine to shape their behaviour in a best possible way so that others have good thoughts about us in return.

3.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How are ASD people different from neurotic people?
2. Write a short note on the levels of social behaviour.
3. Why is it difficult to create friendship with people having ASD syndrome?
4. How are memes different from genes?
5. What are the four basic steps of social interaction?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the approaches related towards understanding social behaviour.
2. What are the causes of social behaviour? Explain with the help of an example.
3. 'Children and adults with ASD have difficulty in interpreting others' intended social messages'. Discuss the statement.
4. Analyse the role of social thinking in determining an individual's behaviour.
5. Explain the concept of *The Four Steps of Perspective Taking*.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - II

SELF-PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOURS

UNIT 4 INTRODUCTION TO SELF-PERCEPTION

Structure

4.0 Introduction
4.1 Objectives
4.2 Self-Perception
  4.2.1 The Self-Concept
  4.2.2 Self-Esteem
  4.2.3 Self-Presentation
  4.2.4 Self-Expression
4.3 Perceiving Others
  4.3.1 Attribution: Understanding the Causes of Other's Behaviour
  4.3.2 Impression Formation and Management
  4.3.3 Non-Verbal Communication
4.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
4.5 Summary
4.6 Key Words
4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
4.8 Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Self-perception is a theory which helps individuals to determine their preferences and attitudes by interpreting the meaning of their own behaviour. We interpret our own actions in the same way we perceive others. Our actions and behaviours are influenced by the social circumstances.

In social psychology, the term perception is defined as a process in which we form impressions about others and it also includes the conclusions which we make about them. However, there are a lot of factors which help in forming a perception about other people. It may include the circumstances, our own characteristics and opinions and so on.

In this unit, the concept of self-perception, self-concept, the importance of self-focusing and the theories of self-presentation have been discussed. The concept of perceiving others and the types of attribution has been analysed. The unit will also explain the importance of impression formation and non-verbal communication.

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4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of self-perception and self-concept
- Analyse the importance of self-esteem and self-focus
- Interpret the theories and tactics of self-presentation
- Discuss the concept of self-expression
- Explain the importance of attribution and the causes of behaviour
- Analyse the relationship between impression formation and the management
- Interpret the importance of non-verbal communication

4.2 SELF-PERCEPTION

The self is one of the oldest and the most enduring concepts in psychology. Philosophers have always been interested in knowing the self. The self is a social construction formed on the basis of interaction with others. This concept of the self affects the way we relate to others, judge others and so on because of the way we see ourselves. So, the self is used as reference point for social interaction and perceiving others.

The self has multiple components. Yet, we all have an integrated view of ourselves. This is the core of every individual. It is the basis of social identity. The self helps us to evaluate our very being.

Perceived Self-Control

Perceived self-control refers to the belief in which one has control over their inside behaviours, state or on the place or things which surrounds the person.

Self-Serving Bias

It refers to a perceptual process which aims to enhance and maintain self-esteem or the tendency to perceive him or her in an extremely favourable manner.

Self and Gender

Gender plays an important role in creating self-esteem of a person. It is observed that a woman generally lacks self-esteem because of the biased society. They do not believe in themselves as they are often brought up with an opinion that they are not superior as compared to men. Thus, they lack self-esteem.

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4.2.1 The Self-Concept

'Self-concept', also referred to as self-perspective or self-construction, is a multi-dimensional construct that refers to an individual's perception of 'self' in relation to any number of characteristics, such as academics (and non-academics), gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others. While closely related with self-concept clarity (which 'refers to the extent to which self-knowledge is clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable'), it presupposes but is distinguishable from self-awareness, which is simply an individual's awareness of his self. It is also more general than self-esteem, which is a purely evaluative element of the self-concept.

Self is a highly complex, but unified image of an individual. The self is held together by a cognitive framework called the schema. It is a guide to how we process information about ourselves. It is a coherent unit of our affective and cognitive structures that gives meaning to our experiences.

Since, the self is the core of every social being; all information that is significant for the self would tend to be better processed than any other type of data. Psychologists, Higgins and Bargh (1987) indicate that self-relevant information is more readily attended to, retained in memory better and also recalled more effectively. Such a process is known as the self-reference effect. This effect has been established experimentally, as well.

Many selves

Psychologists, Markus and Nurius (1986) suggest that each person's self-concept is a working self-concept at any time. This is open to change as new experiences and new information come by. For example, we change our appearances, learn new skills, and develop newer attitudes and so on. These result in a new self. Individuals themselves could consciously develop a new self, which the others might also acknowledge.

Time and experiences can lead to a newer self. Sometimes, traumatic experiences can also lead to such an alternation in the self; for example, the death of a close and significant person or some disastrous episodes in one's life.

Alternative selves can affect us in several ways which are as follows:

(i) The image of our future self can act as a motivator to work hard, study, overcome bad habits and so on because an ideal self exists before us.

(ii) Often we see ourselves as we wish to be, while other people see us as we really are, at the present time. The attempt must be to bring the two as close as possible.

(iii) There are individual differences among people in terms of how they view the future self. Some are optimists and see positive changes in the future; while the pessimists see little or no change or view the future in negative terms.

Individuals need to recognize that everyone has several possible selves and this is an accurate way to conceive of themselves.

4.2.2 Self-Esteem

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Self-esteem refers to one's attitudes about oneself. It is the evaluation we make of ourselves. It can be negative or positive. People with high self-esteem perceive themselves as good, competent and worthy; while those with a low self-esteem see themselves as unworthy and incompetent.

Self-concept is determined by significant others' opinions about us or the person concerned; for example, the views of parents, teachers, friends, etc. contribute to the way we see ourselves. Self-evaluations are also affected by the characteristics of others with whom we compare ourselves. Therefore, comparison with those who are worse off, (downward comparison) tends to make us feel better about ourselves, while the opposite could hold true with upward comparison.

Low self-esteem affects feelings and behaviour, negatively. It could lead to personal unhappiness and also interpersonal difficulties. Poor social skills could lead to loneliness and eventually to depression. Depression could further result in a tendency to devalue oneself.

Depression is not only the result of low self-esteem, but could also arise from variable self-esteem. This means even minor changes in life experiences can swing our self-esteem levels considerably. This occurs because self-worth is not based on stable sources.

Managing variable self-esteem

To begin with, it is important to elevate our own behaviour to match the ideals or goals that have been set. Alternatively, it is wise to lower our standards so that it meets with our own behaviour. For example, if we wish to excel in anything that is to be undertaken, the chances of success are inherently low. So, setting reasonable levels of perfection may be a winning solution. This would help keep the self-esteem intact.

Self-esteem is to be viewed largely as a factor determined by one's experiences. Childhood experiences are important because these are the formative periods of self-esteem. Here, parental evaluation is crucial. Negative childhood experiences like parental divorce, chronic illnesses, death and other traumas have a telling effect in terms of how the self-esteem develops. Early experiences have long-lasting effects on self-esteem as compared to later-life experiences.

High self-esteem does act as a buffer against negative or threatening experiences. It is a form of protection for the ego state of the individual.

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Self-monitoring behaviour and the self

Self-monitoring refers to the degree to which individuals regulate their behaviour, either on the basis of the demands of the external situation or in terms of their beliefs, attitudes and orientations. High self-monitoring people perhaps engage in skilful role playing as required by the situation. Politicians, actors, salespersons and so on are all seen as displaying such capacities.

Self-monitoring can also be viewed as the result of an internal 'script' that people have in terms of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in a given situation (Schwalbe 1991). For example, many people are friendly and easy going with peers, but more reserved and quiet in the presence of seniors/elders. According to psychologist, Schwalbe, there are two types of self-monitors—one, guided by the audience present, and the others who regulate their behaviour in terms of what is suitable in a particular situation, regardless of who the present members are.

Those individuals who fall in between these two extremes were found to be better adjusted.

Self-focus

Self-focus refers to the centrality of a person's sense of self. This has significance in the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of oneself. Self-focusing could also help in behaviour that is consistent across situations. It is important that self-focusing is not misunderstood as selfishness.

Conclusion

If the self is well differentiated, i.e., the self has several domains—for example, profession family, friends, hobbies, health and finances, etc., —it is likely that some areas are positive while others are not. In the event of any stress, a compartmentalized concept of the self is capable of weathering the harmful effects of the stress better. Here, the positive components of the self can be utilized to manage and overcome the stress effects.

4.2.3 Self-Presentation

As the existence of multiple selves have already been recognized, it is likely that people may choose to present themselves differently on different occasions. The self which is chosen to be presented at a given time is a form of self-presentation. A renowned professor of psychology, Barry R Schlenker (1980) explained self-presentation as a process when an individual projects certain aspects of the self to the exclusion of others. According to him, it is a form of impression management and is defined as 'the conscious or unconscious attempt to control images that are projected in real or imagined social interactions.'

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Theories of self-presentation

The theories of self-presentation are known as symbolic interactionism and are discussed as follows:

(i) Charles Horton Cooley (1902/1922), an American sociologist has emphasized that participants in a social interaction take the role of others and see themselves as others see them. This process helps them to known how they appear to others. This understanding permits them to guide their social behaviour in the direction that they feel is most desirable.

(ii) Erving Goffman (1967), a Canadian-American sociologist considers this to be like a theatre performance where each person acts out a 'line', i.e., a set of carefully chosen verbal and non-verbal acts that express an individual's self. So, effective social interaction requires that people be able to regulate their self-presentation such that others perceive and evaluate it appropriately.

(iii) Alexander and Knight (1971), American sociologists opine that self-presentation is a fundamental fact of social interaction. They suggest that for every social setting there is a pattern of social behaviour that conveys a particular identity that is best suited to that setting. This behavioural pattern is described as situated identity. People try to create the most foreword situated identities for themselves in their social encounters; for example, a businessman would try to present a professional identity at a business meeting, a more casual identity in the office and an informal identity during an office party event. A situated identity is tied to a situation while a role is related to behaviour that is appropriate. The image projected in a specified situation is critical in a situated identity while a suitable behaviour is stressed in a role.

Each of these three theories emphasizes the fact that other people form impressions about us and according to these impressions steer their interactions towards us. All these theories present strategies used by people to manage and control the images they present to others.

Reasons behind self-presentations

There are a number of reasons for the occurrence of self-presentation; some of them are as follows:

- To be liked by others.
- To gain social approval.
- Social approval can have other gains also. It can lead to more power, prestige, status, money and friendship all of which are valued by most people.

- Impression management, which allows for a sense of control over a given situation. This has a distinct advantage, at all times.

These are powerful motivations for regulating self-presentation.

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Self-presentation tactics

Apart from the general images that people seem to project, a variety of specific tactics are also used by people in presenting themselves to others. Sociologists, Jones and Pittman (1982) have identified five clear, well-utilized strategies; they are discussed in detail in the following section.

(i) ***Ingratiation:*** The main goal of this tactic is to be seen as likable. There are a number of ways in which this is achieved; for example, by complementing or flattering we can gain the goodwill of others. Another tactic is to conform to the opinions and behaviour of others. This is a kind of pretence of agreeing. To applaud and concur with what the other does is sure to win affection for the person pretending. This would fail if the pretence or the motivation for agreeing is seen through.

(ii) ***Intimidation:*** In this tactic, fear is aroused as a way of gaining control over a situation; for example, robbers, rapists, etc. Parents also use threat to get children to conform or obey. Threats are negative and could lead to bitterness and escape on the part of the weaker partner in any relationship.

(iii) ***Self-promotion:*** This involves making claims about one's competency in an area. As long as this quality is true, there is no danger of any unfavourable exposure.

(iv) ***Exemplification:*** This is a tactic aimed at establishing a person's integrity and moral worthiness; for example, 'I will stay and finish the work, even if we are in a hurry to go.' The purpose is to create some guilt in the other person and project oneself as a martyr and thereby influence the other and create the desired impression.

(v) ***Supplication:*** In this case, a person who wishes to gain some power or privilege announces openly his or her weakness. While the exemplifier is seeking respect, the supplicant is gaining sympathy. This strategy is used only if all other attempts fail or are likely to fail. Presenting an image of helplessness is the key.

These tactics are used on different occasions, depending on the situation and need. Some people may specialize in the use of one tactic relative to others. All tactics have the same goal of creating the desired impression in order to obtain the desired response.

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4.2.4 Self-Expression

Self-expression is the expression of our personality through the medium of speech or art. It is also a means of expressing our feelings and thoughts. Ideas have to be expressed so that others can understand them. Self-expression is a unique manifestation of our individuality. It is not as natural as is thought to be. For accurate expression of oneself, one has to strive for it. Education could involve the improvement of self-expression. This applies to the conceptualization and language of the expression.

Some people express through writing, others through speech, still others through pictures and through body language. Self-expression is a vibrant form involving varying moments and moods. However, self-expression can be very undemonstrative at times; a mother comforting her child quietly, a lover signaling warmth and passion from a mere glance and an approving handshake from a colleague. All these indicate some forms of connections between people. It is often only meant for the two people involved.

For business people, self-expression implies being an entrepreneur or creating profit; for a scholar it would involve writing an erudite piece after acquiring knowledge; for creative people self-expression involves writing a piece of poetry, creating music, singing, dancing, acting and other forms of artistic expressions. We need to recognize that some people find it easier to build a house, than paint a picture. Still others wish to have an audience for expressing their thoughts.

Sports people express themselves through their chosen activity. Excellence involves going to the top in their sport. Their body and its movements are the means of self-expression. The stamina, determination and skills represent their own self and its manifestation.

Self-expression is also seen in how people live their lives. The principles that are integral to their very existence are showcased in their lifestyle. For some it is service to humanity (Mother Theresa), for others it is peace for many (Dalai Lama), for Mahatma Gandhi it was liberation of the country, it is equal distribution of wealth for the communists, it is liberty for the Americans, for many in Europe the self is expressed in terms of social tolerance, for the ordinary householder it may be the satisfaction of leading a good life and raising a happy family.

In management, some people are problem solvers, while others are people leaders. Scientists express themselves through discoveries and innovations. Adventurers find self-expression in explorations. Environmentalists express themselves through acts of conservation and preservation. Those with wanderlust, express themselves through travelling. The chef finds joy in culinary expressions; children express themselves through make-believe play and free body movements. All these are self-expression of one's values

The ultimate in self-expression is flexibility and newness. Such a message would be well delivered, easily understood and be very appealing; such expressions are eternal.

Check Your Progress

1. What is self-esteem?
2. How is self-concept determined?
3. What are the reasons which result in self-presentation?
4. State any one use of self-focusing.

4.3 PERCEIVING OTHERS

We do not often stop to ask ourselves about the opinions we form about other people, about how and why we form them, nor about their correctness. We choose our friends without knowing why, trust some people and not others, but cannot say why. Paradoxically, the opposite happens too. We form opinions about others, assert them dogmatically, and allow them to determine our whole attitude towards another. How often do we form an instant dislike? Or insist, in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, that someone is entirely trustworthy? Forming opinions about other people can be a profession; in as short a span of time as five minutes, an interviewer decides on a person's suitability for employment, promotion or admission to higher education, and thereby affects that person's life.

4.3.1 Attribution: Understanding the Causes of Other's Behaviour

Knowing other people's moods and thoughts has many advantages. This is only the first step in the process of knowing others. The process by which we seek information to know others is called attribution. It helps us to understand the causes behind others' behaviour as well as our own, at times. Attribution has been extensively studied in social psychology by many researchers.

Attribution is a concept in social psychology referring to how we as individuals explain causes of events, other's behaviour, and our own behaviour. An Austrian psychologist, Fritz Heider argued that, as an active perceiver of the events, an average person continuously or spontaneously makes casual inferences on why the events occur. Eventually, these inferences become beliefs or expectations that allow the person to predict and understand the events that they observe and experience. As such, attribution theory is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how these interpretations relate to their subsequent behaviour.

The two main types of attributions are internal and external attributions. When an internal attribution is made, the cause of the given behaviour is

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assigned to the individual's personality, attitudes, character or disposition. When an external attribution is made, the cause of the given behaviour is assigned to the situation in which the behaviour was seen (that the individual producing the behaviour did so because of the surrounding environment or the social situation). These two types of attribution lead to very different perceptions of the individual engaging in a behaviour (personal is internal and situational is external).

Attributions are critical to management because perceived causes of behaviour may influence managers' and employees' judgements and actions. For instance, managers must often observe employee performance and make related judgements. If a manager attributes an employee's poor performance to a lack of effort, then the outcome is likely to be negative for that employee; he or she may receive a poor performance appraisal rating or even be terminated from the job. Conversely, if a manager perceives that an employee's poor performance is due to a lack of skill, the manager may assign the employee to further training or provide more instruction or coaching. Making an inaccurate judgement about the causes of poor performance can have negative repercussions for the organization.

Attributions also may influence employee motivation. Employees who perceive the cause of their success to be outside of their control may be reluctant to attempt new tasks and may lose motivation to perform well in the workplace. Conversely, employees who attribute their success to themselves are more likely to have high motivation for work. Thus, understanding attributions that people make can have a strong effect on both employee performance and managerial effectiveness.

Attribution process and the causes of behaviour

Attribution is considered to be a three-stage process. First, the behaviour of an individual must be observed. Second, the perceiver must determine that the behaviour they have observed is deliberate. That is, the person being observed is believed to have behaved intentionally. Finally, the observer attributes the observed behaviour to either internal or external causes. Internal causes are attributed to the person being observed, while external causes are attributed to outside factors. The two internal attributions one can make are that a person's ability or a person's effort determined the outcome. Task difficulty and luck are the external causes of behaviour. When perceiving behaviour, an observer will make a judgement as to which of these factors is the cause of behaviour. However, when making a determination between internal and external causes of behaviour, the perceiver must examine the elements of consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus.

Consistency describes whether the person being observed behaves the same way when faced with the same set of circumstances. If the person is being observed and acts the same way in the same type of situation,

consistency is high; if he or she acts differently each time, then consistency is low. Distinctiveness is whether the observed person acts the same way in different types of situations. If the person being observed exhibits the same behaviour in a variety of contexts, then distinctiveness is low; if they have different behaviour depending on the context, then distinctiveness is high. Finally, consensus is the degree to which other people, if in the same situation, would behave similarly to the person being observed. If the observer sees others acting the same way that the person being perceived acts, then consensus is high. However, if others behave differently in the type of situation, then consensus is low. Consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus are evaluated when observing behaviour, and then a judgement about an internal versus external cause of behaviour is made. When consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus are all high, the perceiver concludes that there is an external cause of behaviour. When consistency is high, distinctiveness is low, and consensus is low, the perceiver will attribute the cause of behaviour to internal factors.

4.3.2 Impression Formation and Management

It is generally believed that first impressions are very important. In many situations (like an interview) one does not get to change the impression at all. Therefore, a lot of importance is given to creating a good impression. Many researchers have been carried out to analyse the accuracy of first impressions. S E Asch, a Polish gestalt psychologist (1946) in a classic study got his subjects to write down their impressions of a hypothetical person with the following description:

- Person A: Intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn and envious
- Person B: Envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious and intelligent

These two lists are identical in content, but the order is reversed. In the first list, positive traits are followed by negative ones; while in the second it is negative followed by the positive ones. The impressions formed of the first person will be positive, while that of the second will be negative. Asch called this the ‘effect of primacy’.

The first adjective presented sets the tone for the impression in either case. So, the first data, available makes us pay less attention to details that follow. This tendency to minimize cognitive work and form impressions is a powerful one in the way we process social information.

A social psychologist, N H Anderson (1981) suggests that we combine information and then come up with a weighted average to form an impression. The weightage is placed on the following:

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(i) The source of the information (from a trustworthy source or otherwise).

(ii) The information being positive or negative (there is a tendency to give more weight to negative information, because it is distinctive).

(iii) The extent to which the description is unusual or atypical (the more unusual, the greater the weight).

(iv) We assign greater weight to information received first as compared to later information (Asch effect of primacy).

Impression formation does not take place in a cognitive vacuum. Our previous experiences provide a template for our current impression formation. We also tend to focus on person types because it is an easy cognitive process at work. So we categorize people very early and well before we have had the necessary inputs. Hence, we combine information to arrive at our judgement of people. Impression formation occurs long before all the information is available. This has to be recognized by the presenter as well as the evaluator.

Impression management

Impression management is the art of creating a good impression; it is a very strong desire. We all try to manage how one appears before others. This effort is called impression management. A good impression has several advantages in social life. Impression management tactics can be used for enhancing our image.

4.3.3 Non-Verbal Communication

Let us now discuss non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication thrives on observation

While oral communication thrives on listening and the written communication thrives on reading, the non-verbal communication thrives on observation. Non-verbal communication may take any of the following forms—body language, gestures, postures, appearance, personal space, codes, signs and signals, facial expressions, timings, and personal behaviour.

Non-verbal communication is deliberate or unintended

Non-verbal communication may be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintended. It may substitute verbal communication or supplement it. There may be times when non-verbal communication may contradict oral communication. When used with full awareness, body language can create the desired impact. At the same time, unintended body movements and expressions may confuse the listener. Non-verbal communication is extremely relevant during meetings and interactions of a direct or face-to-face nature.

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Non-verbal communication has universal appeal

The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communications, which depend on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak. Mother Teresa's language of love and compassion is just one example. In the organizational context, however, non-verbal language can be used effectively as an adjunct to verbal communication.

Check Your Progress

5. Why are attributions critical to the management?
6. What is impression management?
7. State the greatest merit of non-verbal communication.

4.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Self-esteem refers to one's attitudes about oneself. It is the evaluation we make of ourselves.
2. Self-concept is determined by significant others' opinions about us or the person concerned; for example, the views of parents, teachers, friends, etc. contribute to the way we see ourselves.
3. The following are the reasons which result in self-presentation:
   (a) To be liked by others.
   (b) To gain social approval.
   (c) Social approval can have other gains also. It can lead to more power, prestige, status, money and friendship all of which are valued by most people.
4. Self-focusing results in better self-insight. This leads to more attempts to reduce the discrepancies between actual behaviour and the self-concept.
5. Attributions are critical to management because perceived causes of behaviour may influence managers' and employees' judgements and actions. For instance, managers must often observe employee performance and make related judgements.
6. Impression management is the art of creating a good impression; it is a very strong desire. We all try to manage how one appears before others. This effort is called impression management.

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7. The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communications, which depend on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.

4.5 SUMMARY

- The self is one of the oldest and the most enduring concepts in psychology. Philosophers have always been interested in knowing the self.
- The concept of the self affects the way we relate to others, judge others and so on because of the way we see ourselves.
- Perceived self-control refers to the belief in which one has control over their inside behaviours, state or on the place or things which surrounds the person.
- 'Self-concept', also referred to as self-perspective or self-construction, is a multi-dimensional construct that refers to an individual's perception of 'self' in relation to any number of characteristics, such as academics (and non-academics), gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others.
- Self is a highly complex, but unified image of an individual. The self is held together by a cognitive framework called the schema.
- Since, the self is the core of every social being; all information that is significant for the self would tend to be better processed than any other type of data.
- Psychologists, Markus and Nurius (1986) suggest that each person's self-concept is a working self-concept at any time.
- Time and experiences can lead to a newer self. Sometimes, traumatic experiences can also lead to such an alternation in the self; for example, the death of a close and significant person or some disastrous episodes in one's life.
- Individuals need to recognize that everyone has several possible selves and this is an accurate way to conceive of themselves.
- Self-esteem refers to one's attitudes about oneself. It is the evaluation we make of ourselves. It can be negative or positive.
- Self-concept is determined by significant others' opinions about us or the person concerned; for example, the views of parents, teachers, friends, etc. contribute to the way we see ourselves.
- Low self-esteem affects feelings and behaviour, negatively. It could lead to personal unhappiness and also interpersonal difficulties.

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- Self-esteem is to be viewed largely as a factor determined by one's experiences. Childhood experiences are important because these are the formative periods of self-esteem.
- Self-monitoring refers to the degree to which individuals regulate their behaviour, either on the basis of the demands of the external situation or in terms of their beliefs, attitudes and orientations.
- Self-focus refers to the centrality of a person's sense of self. This has significance in the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of oneself.
- As the existence of multiple selves have already been recognized, it is likely that people may choose to present themselves differently on different occasions.
- Apart from the general images that people seem to project, a variety of specific tactics are also used by people in presenting themselves to others.
- Self-expression is the expression of our personality through the medium of speech or art. It is also a means of expressing our feelings and thoughts.
- The ultimate in self-expression is flexibility and newness. Such a message would be well delivered, easily understood and be very appealing; such expressions are eternal.
- Attribution is a concept in social psychology referring to how we as individuals explain causes of events, other's behaviour, and our own behaviour.
- The two main types of attributions are internal and external attributions. These two types of attribution lead to very different perceptions of the individual engaging in a behaviour (personal is internal and situational is external).
- Attributions are critical to management because perceived causes of behaviour may influence managers' and employees' judgements and actions.
- Consistency describes whether the person being observed behaves the same way when faced with the same set of circumstances.
- It is generally believed that first impressions are very important. In many situations (like an interview) one does not get to change the impression at all. Therefore, a lot of importance is given to creating a good impression.
- Impression formation does not take place in a cognitive vacuum. Our previous experiences provide a template for our current impression formation.

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- Impression management is the art of creating a good impression; it is a very strong desire. We all try to manage how one appears before others.
- Non-verbal communication may be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintended. It may substitute verbal communication or supplement it.
- The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communications, which depend on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.

4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Attribution:** It refers to a concept in social psychology referring to how we as individuals explain causes of events, other's behaviour, and our own behaviour.
- **Self-Concept:** It refers to a multi-dimensional construct that focuses on, an individual's perception of 'self' in relation to any number of characteristics, such as academics (and non-academics), gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others.
- **Self-Expression:** It refers to the expression of our personality through the medium of speech or art.
- **Self-Monitoring:** It refers to the degree to which individuals regulate their behaviour, either on the basis of the demands of the external situation or in terms of their beliefs, attitudes and orientations.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the consequences of low self-esteem?
2. How does attribution influence employee motivation?
3. Write a short note on self-expression and its importance.
4. What are the self-presentation tactics?
5. List the types of attribution.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the affects of alternative selves.
2. 'Self is a highly complex, but unified image of an individual'. Analyse the statement.

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3. Explain the theories of self-presentation.
4. Discuss the process of attribution.
5. Explain the relationship between impression formation and management.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5 ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

Structure

5.0 Introduction
5.1 Objectives
5.2 Development of Attitude
5.3 Attitude Formation
5.3.1 Social Learning
5.3.2 Genetic Factors
5.3.3 Direct Experience
5.4 Attitude and Behaviour
5.4.1 The Essential Link: Specificity, Component, Vested Interest, Attitude, Strength and Accessibility
5.4.2 Self-Awareness and the Attitude–Behaviour Link
5.5 Resisting Persuasion
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5.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
5.7 Summary
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5.10 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Attitude is defined as a psychological construct which characterizes a person. Behaviour psychology is a condition which states that all kind of behaviour is acquired through conditioning. It occurs because of interaction with environment. Behaviorists are of the opinion that our responses towards the environment shape our actions. Social learning theory states that individuals learn from one other through modelling, observation and imitation.

The way in which people think or feel is reflected by their attitude. On the other hand, an individual's conduct is reflected by his or her behaviour. Attitude is defined as the way in which we perceive things and behaviour is ruled by social norms.

In this unit, the concept of attitude, its functions and social learning have been discussed. The unit will provide an in-depth knowledge of cognitive dissonance and resistance to persuasion. The relationship between attitude and behaviour has also been analysed.

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5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the main components and functions of attitude
- Explain the concept of social learning
- Identify the ways in which we acquire attitude from other people
- Analyse the relationship between attitude and behaviour
- Explain the concept of resisting persuasion and cognitive dissonance

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ATTITUDE

An attitude is an evaluation of an object or a person(s). It shapes our social perceptions and behaviour and it can be positive negative or neutral. Attitudes are made up of several dimensions, which are bipolar in nature; for example, specific or general, strong or weak, simple or complex like religion, known or unknown, linked to action or unlinked to action. Attitudes have the following three components:

(i) Affect: The core involves affect, this is the emotional reaction to the object concerned. This can be described as the extent to which we like or dislike an object, for example, politicians, certain type of food and shoes. In fact, all objects do trigger some kind of a positive or negative emotion. This is the feeling component of an attitude.

(ii) Cognition: Attitudes also involve cognitions. These include the knowledge about the object, as well as beliefs, ideas, memories and images. For example, if we are positive about a particular player or team, we would gather a variety of knowledge about him/her or them and will remember a lot about them or their performances.

(iii) Behaviour: The last component is behaviour. As a rule, when our attitudes are brought to mind, we are more likely to behave in accordance with the attitudes that we hold, rather than act inconsistently.

Current studies by Preston and Wall (2002) suggest that our attitudes activate regions in the brain that support specific actions. For example, when we see or smell a delicious food item, we prepare ourselves for action. Understanding all these is important to know attitudes and tackling the issue of attitude change.

Functions of Attitudes

Every attitude serves some purpose or the other. Simply, they motivate and guide behaviour. Besides this A H Eagly and S Chaiken (1998) have identified four functions of an attitude that are as follows:

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(i) **Knowledge function:** Knowledge function helps us to organize our understanding of the social world. This is the basis of how we attend to store, remember and retrieve information pertaining to a given object. This leads to better speed and efficiency in processing social information. This function also leads us to seek and selectively attend to information that supports our pre-existing attitudes. Self-evaluation also follows this function of attitudes. Prejudice also follows the same principle. Once attitudes have been acquired, they influence how information is gathered and processed.

(ii) **Value expressive function:** Attitudes help us to express our cherished values. This is usually carried out in groups made up of people who reinforce and support the attitudes. For example, groups who play or watch cricket, fans of Michael Jackson, groups of particular political leanings. Value expression occurs in the context of reference groups. Such groups are those whose opinions matter and affect our attitudes significantly. This function is inherently satisfying to the holder of a particular attitude. By expressing a value that is in agreement with the attitude held, people find a sense of joy and commitment to the opinions held. One is inclined to view people and groups holding similar attitudes more favourably. The type of college one joins and the subject of study one chooses also reflect the operation of the value expressive function of an attitude.

(iii) **Ego-defensive function of attitudes:** It protects us from awareness of our own negative attributes and impulses, for example, our tendencies for aggression and sexuality. We do this by developing certain attitudes that help us view ourselves in accordance with our cherished view of ourselves. Deep down inside lurk our tendencies toward sexuality. We do not wish to acknowledge this to ourselves, because it is both frightening as well as socially unacceptable. This innate impulse is deflected on to socially less powerful groups, which perceives them to be immoral. So ,a prejudice attitude is developed towards the marginalized group. This leads to the phenomenon of stereotyping; for example, homosexuals are criminals.

The holding of a particular attitude helps us save ourselves the acknowledgment of certain unpleasant truths about ourselves. The unpleasant truths are then perceived as typical of people belonging to a particular group in society. They are then seen as an undesirable section of society. By viewing this as the scum of society, we are able to spare ourselves the view of harbouring undesirable impulses within us. This is the ego-defensive function of an attitude; for example, we all know that accidents happen and that we or our dear ones could also suffer from it, but this is a frightening thought. Thus, our ego tries to

spare us from this fear by developing an attitude which believes that road accident victims are careless road users. This attitude makes us feel relatively safe when we step on to the road. By this belief, our ego is protected from the fear of accidents and possible death on the roads.

(iv) The utilitarian function of attitudes: Attitudes sensitize and alert us to objects that are rewarding to us. These objects are then sought after. Other objects that are undesirable and to be avoided also figure in our attitudes. These are survival related, to begin with. For example, when there is a toxic atmosphere, we try to avoid it. But when there is clean fresh air, we wish to stay longer. Similarly, after eating sweet foods; one is naturally drawn to something that is salty to taste. These are beneficial to survival. Stimuli that are initially neutral, can be modified by pairing with objects that generate a positive or negative reaction. Example: consumer products are sold by pairing emotionally arousing pleasant sights, sounds and smells with certain products. Also using animals, children and so on have been found to be useful strategies for selling goods and services as compared to the use of neutral objects. Our attitudes are vital for daily living. They help us identify rewarding and threatening objects. Attitudes are the reason why we choose to belong to certain groups. They protect from unpleasant realities. Attitudes act as powerful guides to our understanding of the social world.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the use of the knowledge function?
2. Why is attitude an important part of our lives?

5.3 ATTITUDE FORMATION

Attitude is considered to be the central theme in social psychology. Generally, it refers to an individual's evaluation about the social world; the extent to which people have favourable or unfavourable reactions to any issues, ideas, persons, social groups or objects. Attitude is one of the seriously researched topics in social psychology. The reason is that attitudes strongly influence human thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The evaluation an individual makes about his or her world is very important. It forms the basis of social cognition. Eagly and Chaiken (1998) suggest that social thoughts are slowly and steadily build by attitudes. Attitudes are learned. Some evidence suggests that attitudes may be influenced by genetic factors too.

For example, one individual may like vegetarianism another may like non-vegetarianism. One may have a positive approach to one political party, another may have a total negative approach to that party. Certain social

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psychologists notice that at times people take neither positive nor negative stand instead they take a middle stand, otherwise called ambivalent (J R Priester and R E Petty, 2001; M M Thompson, M P Zanna and D W Griffin, 1995). It is also an important point that people find it very difficult to change any attitude.

5.3.1 Social Learning

Attitudes are learned from society and therefore, children do not show social discrimination. Social learning theory or SLT is the theory that suggests that people learn new behaviour through observational learning of the social factors in their environment. If people observe positive, desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, then they are more likely to model, imitate, and adopt the behaviour themselves.

Mechanisms for learning attitudes

By and large, socialization is the process by which attitudes are learned. This is the process by which a child becomes an adult member of a given society. Children learn attitudes from all those significant people around them. First, it is from parents (home), then from the school (teachers), then from friends, media and others.

Attitudes acquired from other persons

The processes underlying the learning of attitudes have been identified by psychologists and are as follows:

(i) Classical conditioning

Classical conditioning is learning by association. The principle involved here is that when one stimulus occurs first, and this is then consecutively followed by another, then the appearance of the first becomes the signal that the second would also occur. Soon, the same reactions that have been occurring to the first stimulus would also occur to the second stimulus. This would be more so if the second stimulus by itself is capable of evoking strong reactions (refer Figure 5.1).

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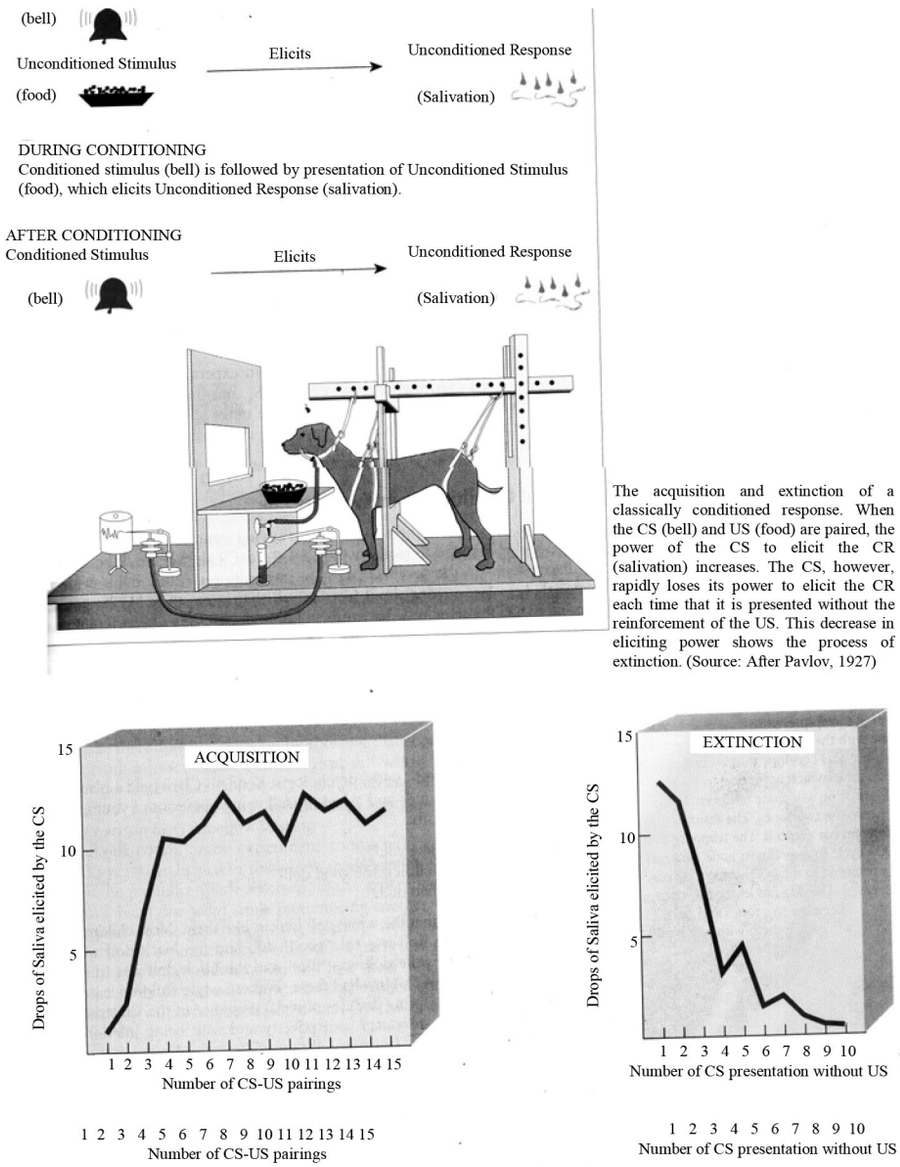

Fig. 5.1 *Classical Conditioning Model*

In Figure 5.1:

- CS = Conditioned stimulus
- UCS = Unconditioned Stimulus
- UCR = Unconditioned Response
- CR = Conditioned Response

This process of classical conditioning can be seen as the basis for acquiring attitudes as well. Staats et al (1962) found that initially neutral words when paired with words or stimuli that tend to elicit strong negative

reactions (like electric shocks or harsh words, etc.) acquire the capacity to elicit strong negative or unfavourable reactions.

Evaluations form the core of attitudes

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Judgements or evaluations occur all the time during social interactions. In real-life conditions, the classical conditioning model can be seen to apply directly to the process of acquiring attitudes. For example, a child repeatedly sees the mother's frowning or avoiding members of a particular social group, each time she meets them. There are other signs of displeasure also that are displayed in this context. At first, the child is indifferent to the members of this group and shows no reactions. The child does not identify characteristics associated with this group (hair, clothing, language). However, as a result of the repeated pairing of this group and its members with the mother's negative reactions; the child now starts associating certain obvious characteristics with the members belonging to this group. Gradually, the child also comes to react negatively to these identifiable characteristics and thereafter to the group members, associated with these traits. This is the process by which attitudes are learned.

If members of a particular group are often isolated, despised and talked about negatively and the behaviour towards them are one of displeasure/ avoidance, etc., and these are repeated then children and others would come to associate these negative thoughts and behaviour with the group in question. Soon the group and its members would be evaluated negatively. The child and the others have learnt to associate a specific group with certain characteristics, with negative or distinct responses. The group and its members are evaluated negatively. This completes the process of social learning of attitudes.

Since language is also part of the evaluation process and negative statements accompany negative reactions involving specific group members, the verbal responses are also acquired for description. Thus, both language and behaviour besides thoughts and feelings are also learned. So, all the three components of an attitude, thought, feeling and behaviour are learned through classical conditioning processes, involving association.

There is also evidence to suggest that this form of attitude learning occurs, even when people are not fully aware of the stimulus. Here, the explanation of acquiring negative attitudes in based on the unconscious association that occurs as a result of repeated pairing. When affect arousing stimuli are presented only for a very short duration, the recognition may not occur. The emotions, specially the negative ones, associated with the stimuli are aroused. So conditioning occurs even outside of conscious awareness. This has implications for the association between affect and cognition. That emotions are experienced even before the stimuli are properly recognized indicates that learning of the association between emotion and thought can

be readily triggered by the affect, well ahead of the understanding of the stimuli or object that is creating the response.

Attitudes are aroused by emotions, even when the object of affect is not well recognized.

In terms of attitude learning, this means even before our object is recognized, the negative emotions associated with it are aroused; for example, the names of people belonging to a particular group could arouse negative emotions long before the members of the group are even encountered. This is known as subliminal conditioning. J A Krosnick (1992) and his colleagues indicate that even if subjects cannot identify or recognize certain stimuli adequately, yet the stimuli shape our attitudes. This is indeed a powerful process at work.

(ii) Instrumental conditioning

Studies on instrumental conditioning have been derived from the work of psychologists, Bekhterev and Thorndike. Here, the subject's or person's behaviour is instrumental to the gaining of a reward or avoidance of punishment, therefore the name, instrumental conditioning. Since there is an operation involved it is also known as operant conditioning.

Consider an example, where a child hears the ice cream vendor and the child goes and buys the ice cream. Here, it is important to recognize that both types of learning get incorporated (classical and instrumental types of conditioning). In the first part, the child salivates to the sound of the ice-cream vendor's bell. This is the classical conditioning part of the learning. In the second half of the sequence, the child knows that reward would occur if certain responses are made, like going with the money and buying the ice-cream and then eating it. The first part is involuntary (salivation) the second part is voluntary. The first part is learned by classical conditioning and the second part by operant conditioning. This is known as the Two-factor theory of learning.

Procedural variations have been tried to establish different forms of control over a person's behaviour. E L Thorndike (1911) distinguished between satisfiers and annoyers or positive and negative reinforcers. A satisfying state of affair is one wherein a person does something to gain a reward or benefit. A negative or dissatisfying state is one wherein a person is motivated to avoid some situation.

Four instrumental conditioning procedures have been proposed by psychologist, Krosnick (1948), which are as follows:

(i) Reward training: It is a type of box apparatus used for training. Here, a pigeon is presented with a light source and a key for pecking. The bird is rewarded with food for pecking the key as soon as the light appears.

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(ii) ***Avoidance training:*** Here, the subject can avoid any noxious stimulus by responding to a signal in a given manner. Bekheterev (1932) used conditioned withdrawal responses of hand or foot after being delivered an electric shock, by pressing on a bar or lifting a hand or foot, from a pedal or grid. Sometimes, turning off a noxious stimulus by operating a switch also constituted a form of avoidance training.

(iii) ***Omission training:*** In this type of learning, a positive reinforcement occurs when a particular response fails to appear. In daily life the best-known example would be one where food is given only when the dog does not jump on to the sofa or bed in a house. The training is to omit the dog's behaviour of jumping on to the bed/sofa.

(iv) ***Punishment training:*** In this type of training a shock or any other form of punishment follows the occurrence of a specified response; for example, a child is rebuked or whacked for disobeying the adult command. This type of training is generally used for extinction of a given, undesirable response.

Shaping behaviour

Animals can be trained to perform tricks in a circus, dogs can be trained to sniff for drugs, children can be made to do complicated dance steps. All these involve gradually molding the responses into a desired pattern. These are carried out by a process known as successive approximations. This means engaging in a series of steps of ever closely matched responses to the ultimate pattern of behaviour desired. For example, teaching a child to tie shoe-laces would involve the following steps:

- Step 1: Allow the child to slip into the shoes.
- Step 2: Then teach the simple knot to the child.
- Step 3: Let the child put on the shoes and tie the knot.
- Step 4: Get the child to perfect the knot.

Reward each step and get the desired behaviour. It may take time, but it can be achieved. Behavioural effects of various types of consequences is tabulated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 *Behavioural Effects of Various Types of Consequences*

	Consequence of making a response	**Example**	**Effect on response probability**
Positive begins	Positive event	Food given	Increase reinforcement
Negative reinforcement	Negative event ends	Pain stops	Increase

Punishment	Negative event begins	Pain begins	Decrease
Punishment (response cost)	Positive event ends	Food removed	Decrease
Non	Nothing	—	Decrease reinforcement

Table 5.2 illustrates the comparison of classical and operant conditioning.

Table 5.2 *Comparison of Classical and Operant Conditioning*

	Classical conditioning	**Operant conditioning**
Nature of Responses	Involuntary, reflex	Spontaneous, voluntary
Reinforce-ment	Occurs before response (Conditioned stimulus paired with unconditioned stimulus)	Occurs after response (Response is followed by reinforcing stimulus or event)
Role of learner	Passive (Response is elicited by US)	Active (Response is emitted)
Nature of learning	Neutral stimulus becomes a CS through association with a US	Probability of making a response is altered by consequences that follow it.

(iii) Modelling

The third type of learning is modelling. A class watches the teacher draw a particular figure. Later, when the children are given paper and crayon they also try to draw a similar figure. Here, both observation and modelling are involved. In observational learning, watching and initiating the actions of others is the key to obtain the desired responses. Modelling is a process, in which information or behaviour is imparted by example, even before direct practice is allowed. So, the viewer merely gets to see and notice a particular action, with no practice involved.

A model is a person who serves as an example in observational learning, psychologist, A Bandura (1971). By observing a model, a person may do the following:

(i) Learn new responses.

(ii) Learn to carry out or avoid previously learned responses (depending on what happens to the model for doing or not doing the same thing).

(iii) Learn a general rule that can be applied to various situations.

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Certain conditions that must be present for observational learning to occur are as follows:

(i) The learner must pay attention to the model and remember what was done; for example, a child watches Tendulkar hit the ball to all parts of the ground. He would attentively watch a few movements and strokes, but he cannot remember, all of them. So the learning is not complete.

(ii) The learner must be able to reproduce the modelled response; for example, we may watch world class gymnasts, but may never to able to reproduce their movements.

(iii) If the model displays a response and is rewarded for it, the learner is more likely to imitate that response/behaviour; for example, a hero's behaviour.

In other words, a model who is attractive, rewarded, admired, high in status, is likely to be imitated more than others, who are low in these features, Bandura and Walters (1963).

Finally, when a new response is tried, normal reinforcement determines whether the responses would be repeated thereafter.

Imitating models

Modelling has a powerful effect on behaviour. In a classic experiment, children saw a clip where an adult was shown attacking a blown up doll called BoBo–The Clown. All types of attacking acts were viewed. Later, the children who had viewed these clips were frustrated by having their favourite toys taken away from them. They were then presented with the BoBo doll. Most imitated the attacks that the clip showed to the doll. The children also punched, kicked and threw the doll, to express their anger. This showed that the children imitated the model in the film clip and displayed similar behaviours. Children do not blindly imitate models. Only those models who are rewarded provide them with an incentive for initiating.

Children imitiate what parents do, more than what they say. Thus, through modelling, children learn attitudes, gestures, behaviours and even fears and anxieties. Bad habits are also possibly learned through modelling. For example, use of foul language, beating, yelling, screaming, not getting up early, etc., are also learned from models in the home, school, peers and then the media. TV also acts as a model. Televised violence has been found to have a significant impact on aggressive outbursts in children and adults. Parents and other sources serve as guides for passive formation of attitudes. Forming attitudes takes place through the following:

(i) Association: Classical conditioning.

(ii) Reinforcement/punishment: Instrumental conditioning; children and others are rewarded for holding and expressing certain attitudes and punished for wrong unacceptable ones.

(iii) Modelling: We learn and base our behaviour and attitudes only by seeing and hearing others who are significant in our lives.

5.3.2 Genetic Factors

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Genetic factors can influence our height, eye colour, and physical characteristics, the idea that they might also play a role in our thinking seems strange, to say the least. In fact, a small but growing body of empirical evidence indicates that genetic factors may play some small role in attitudes (Arvey et al, 1989; Keller et al, 1992).

Most of this evidence involves comparisons between identical and non-identical twins. Because identical twins share the same genetic inheritance while non-identical twins do not, higher correlations between the attitudes of the identical twins would suggest that genetic factors play a role in shaping such attitudes. This is precisely what has been found; the attitudes of identical twins do correlate more highly than those of non-identical twins (Waller et al., 1990).

Attitude's influence on behaviour

Social psychologists came with lot of research evidences that attitudes influence human behaviour. For example, if one believes that a person is threatening, he may feel dislike and therefore act unfriendly with that person. It seems several factors determine the extent to which attitudes influence human behaviour. To say a few, the situation, features of the attitude and strength of the attitude decides the effect of influence on behaviour.

Attitudes, reasoned thought and behaviour

The first of these mechanisms seems to operate in situations where to give careful, deliberate thought to our attitudes and their implications for our behaviour. For example, in their theory of planned behaviour, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) suggest that the best predictor of how to act in a given situation is the strength of our intentions with respect to that situation (Ajzen, 1987).

Perhaps, a specific example will help illustrate the eminently reasonable nature of this assertion. Suppose a student is considering body piercing, for instance, wearing a nose ornament. According to pscyhologists, and Fishbein, these are strongly influenced by three key factors.

The first factor is the person's attitude toward the behaviour in question. If the student really dislikes pain and resist the idea of someone sticking a needle through hisor her nose, his intention to engage in such behaviour may be weak.

The second factor relates to the person's beliefs about how others will evaluate this behaviour (this factor is known as subjective norms). If

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the students think that others will approve of body piercing, his intention to perform it may be strengthened. If he or she believes that others will disapprove of it, his intention may be weakened.

Finally, intentions are also affected by perceived behavioural control—the extent to which a person perceives a behaviour as hard or easy to accomplish. If it is viewed as difficult, intentions are weaker than if it is viewed as easy to perform. Together, these factors influence intentions; and these, in turn, are the predictor of the individual's behaviour.

5.3.3 Direct Experience

Some attitudes are also learned and formed as a result of one's own experiences; for example, liking for a particular type of food, dislike for a group in society and fondness for a special type of music are all acquired on the basis of direct experiences with these situations. Attitudes formed by direct experience are generally stronger and are very resistant to change.

Attitudes formed through direct behavioural experience with an attitude object have been found to predict better behaviour than attitudes formed through indirect experience. An experiment was conducted to test the hypothesis if an information processing difference exists between direct and indirect experience. Subjects watched a videotape of an individual who was working on a puzzle. The subjects were asked whether to empathize with that person or not. Taking the perspective of the person having the direct experience led 'empathy subjects' to behave more consistently with their own reported attitudes toward those puzzles than 'control subjects'. The results suggest that direct experience affects the attitude formation process by altering the way in which the available information is processed.

Attitude as heuristics

Altitudes act as heuristics. This shortcut helps us to reduce the information overload that we experience and facilitates decision-making. Attitudes help us simplify living; for example, by having a particular food preference, the choice of restaurants becomes very much easier, when planning to eat out.

Check Your Progress

3. What are the ways in which attitude formation takes place?
4. Define subliminal conditioning.

5.4 ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR

One would expect a strong relationship to exist between attitude and behaviour. However, the link is at best a weak one. This explains why many

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of us hold certain attitudes, but do not always convert them into suitable behaviour. For example, we all believe that water is to be conserved but we do not engage in behaviour that support this attitude at home or outside. We waste and pollute water sources without a care for this precious resource.

Often, attitudes do not predict behaviour well. Factors that determine the strength between attitudes and behaviour are several. Let us first learn about attitude specificity and them learn about the other factors.

Attitude specificity: It is easy to recognize that certain attitudes are very specific, while others are general, or vague, for example: Fondness for chutney or cruelty to animals. The chutney preference is a highly specific one and can be seen in almost every situation, but the second attitude may not always elicit behaviour that is aimed at preventing cruelty to animals. Psychologist, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) are of the view that general attitudes have a weak link to behaviour. Specific attitudes can predict behaviour, more favourably.

5.4.1 The Essential Link: Specificity, Component, Vested Interest, Attitude, Strength and Accessibility

It is obvious to expect a clear link between strong attitudes and behaviour. Strong attitudes tend to develop from direct experience, as compared to those passively learned from observation or narrations by others.

Vested interest

A second factor is vested interest in a given issue. Anything that is concerned with one's own life has a lot of significance. So, attitudes that are related to one's life have a lot of valence. For example, young people would be more interested in employment opportunities than older people. So the youth would have vested interests in job-related matters. This attitude would be more closely linked to behaviour from this group, as compared to the older group; many student activism behaviour is based on this need in their group.

Availability

Availability refers to the ease with which attitudes can be accessed, Fazio (1986). Anything that comes to mind readily has a greater influence over behaviour than those that are not easily recallable.

Increased vested interests could lead to more availability and therefore exert greater influence on behaviour. This gets further strengthened if directs experience is involved in learning a particular attitude. Thus, the attitude-behaviour link is related to the following:

- The type of learning (direct or indirect)
- The extent of vested interests involved
- The extent of availability

Each of these is interrelated and one increases the strength of the other. All these jointly enhance the attitude–behaviour link.

5.4.2 Self-Awareness and the Attitude–Behaviour Link

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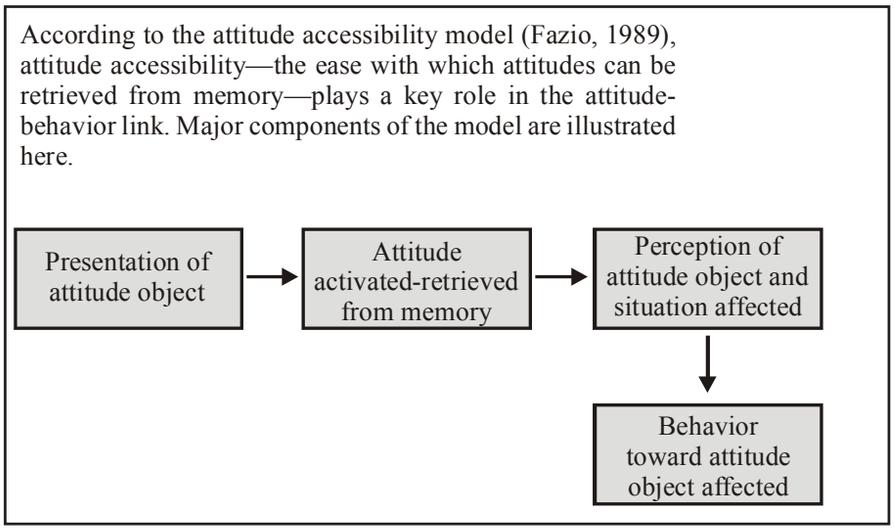
Gibbons (1978) found that heightened self-awareness increases the likelihood of the attitude–behaviour model. This increases the experiences, creates more vested interests and thereafter increases the availability of an attitude (refer Figure 5.2).

Fig. 5.2 *Self-Awareness and the Attitude–Behaviour Link*

Exhibit 5.1 illustrates the ABC model, which stands for the Affect-Behaviour-Cognition model. Each attitude is made up of affect, behaviour and cognition. It is also called the attitude accessibility model.

Exhibit 5.1 *Attitude Accessbility Model*



Source: Based on suggestions by Fazio, 1989.

This model is based on associative strength. The strength of the association between an attitude object and its memory is crucial for the evaluation of the object. The stronger the association, the more readily the attitude is activated and the larger the influence on behaviour. Some attitudes may be activated in an automatic manner. This is called the Automatic Attitude

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Activation Effect, Bargh et al (1996). Once activated, attitudes come into consciousness and guide overt actions.

Strong attitudes, specific attitudes and personally relevant attitudes are generally more accessible. Therefore, some attitudes have a direct link to behaviour while others do not.

Attitudes and behaviour link are also subject to the influence of subjective norms (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). This is known as the Theory of Reasoned Action which suggests that people quite consciously and deliberately choose one form of action, as opposed to another. These subjective norms are made up of what others will (or will not) accept or approve as a course of action. Certain types of clothes, behaviour will not be acceptable to others in certain situations. Another example is attitudes of mothers towards breast-feeding. Psychologist, Ajzen (1996) also proposed the theory of planned behaviour which involves people's beliefs about whether they can successfully engage in a particular behaviour. For example, the use of contraception; it is not only attitude towards this topic, but also the feasibility of carrying out this thought into action, that determines the outcome in terms of behaviour. This is perceived control over a given behaviour. This theory predicts well, whether students would engage in studies with greater effort for higher academic achievements, dieting, exercising, undergo medical testing and a host of other related actions.

Attitudes are sometimes inconsistent. This also creates problems for the smooth link between attitudes and behaviour; for example, we may like certain traits in a person, but dislike certain habits in them. This sometimes makes it hard to develop friendship with such a person.

Attitudes are also influenced by the inconsistency between feelings (affect) and cognitive (knowledge) components, in terms of the behavioural outcomes. For example, many people like a job with the government, but not the salaries. So one is not able to predict which of these components would dominate, while predicting behaviour—choose a government job or go to the private sector for employment.

Another problem in the attitude-behaviour link is the mismatch between attitudes and actual behavioural targets; for example, save the tiger from extinction is a correct attitude. How would it convert into behaviour other than making a donation to the cause? Specific instances of real behaviour are often far away from the attitudinal concerns.

Check Your Progress

5. State the premise of Theory of Reasoned Action.
6. State any one disadvantage of attitude-behaviour link.

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5.5 RESISTING PERSUASION

Everyday, we encounter numerous attempts to persuade us to change our attitudes; parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders, salespersons, politicians, media and several other agents engage in acts of persuasion. Persuasion is needed in a variety of matters; for example, responsible driving, meaningful parenting, honest businesses and trusting relationships. Persuasion is one of the most challenging of tasks.

Traditional Approach

The traditional approach to attitude change began with the Yale social psychologists in the 1950s. They used the pre-post design to study the existing attitudes. They attempted to change attitudes by applying different conditions. Their findings can be presented as follows:

(i) Experts are more persuasive than non-experts, Hovland and Weiss (1952).

(ii) Persuasion is higher if the message is perceived as not deliberately intended to manipulate the receiver, Walster and Festinger (1962). This is why not every commercial succeed.

(iii) People with low self-esteem are persuaded more easily as compared to those with higher self-esteem, J L Janis (1954).

(iv) Popular and attractive communicators are more successful in bringing about attitude change, than unpopular and unattractive communicators, Kiesler and Kiesler (1969). This is why attractive sports and movie stars are used in advertisements.

(v) People are more susceptible to persuasion when they are distracted, than when paying full attention to the messages when the persuasive messages are simple in nature, Allyn and Festinger (1961).

(vi) When the audience holds a position that is contrary to what the persuasive message is suggesting, it is more effective to use two-sided arguments, than the one-sided argument, Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield (1949). Foer example, this tooth paste has several features, despite the cost being a little higher than other brands.

(vii) People who speak rapidly are move persuasive than those who speak slowly, Miller et al. (1976). This is because the fast talkers are perceived to be more knowledgeable about what they are talking about.

(viii) Persuasive effectiveness can be enhanced by messages that arouse fear among the listeners/viewers, Leventhal, Singer and Jones (1965). Anti-smoking campaigns are accompanied by gory pictures of cancerous mouths. These are known as the 'Who says what to whom' form of persuasion.

Some of these techniques work, while others do not. The type of audience, the type of messages, and the existing attitude in the group are all important in determining the success of attitude change.

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Cognitive Approach

In cognitive approach to attitude change, the role of cognitions in bringing about change is central. Here, the following two processes are involved, according to the theorists who proposed it:

(i) **Heuristic–systematic model:** It was proposed by psychologist, Chaiken (1980). These models are similar in essence though their language is different. In the heuristic model, the peripheral route of persuasion is dominant. Because the heuristics of least effort in processing information is the key, persuasion occurs when people attend to the more superficial aspects of a given message. So, attitude change may occur because of factors like the expertise of the communicator, attractiveness of the speaker. This theory suggests that shortcuts are used to justify attitudinal change. This model though based on common sense and is insufficient in explaining the process of attitudinal change.

(ii) **Elaboration likelihood (ELM) model:** It was proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1979). ELM works on the assumption that there are two routes to persuasion. The central route and the systematic route, which makes people think carefully and deliberately about the message. Here, attention is paid to the logic and cogency of the arguments presented. The evidence presented to persuade are also evaluated with care. So, there is a lot of thinking and sifting besides understanding the message and its contents. All these indicate an elaborate cognitive process at work when persuasive messages aimed at attitude change are received.

The amount of time people are willing to devote to processing a persuasive message depends on the motivations of the listener. Motivations tend to be higher when the message has personal consequences for the audience (for example, buying a new car, a new job, etc.). Another factor that would bring the central mechanism into play would be the ability of an individual to be able to clearly process in understanding the message in depth. When the message is clear, and time is available, then in-depth processing is likely to occur.

When motivation is low and the ability and times to process the information is short, then attention is paid to the peripheral cues associated with the message, these are the attractiveness, credentials of the communicator. Here, the central route is ignored and the peripheral route involving heuristics takes over.

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The following three factors are significant for the central route to come into play:

(i) **Personal relevance:** The bearing that the message has on one's goals.

(ii) **One's knowledge about the issue:** The more informed one is, the greater the care and thoughtfulness with which the message is going to be processed.

(iii) **The extent to which the message propels some action on the part of the receiver:** Example, the doctor suggests to the patient that he should quit smoking. How much of responsibility he/she is willing to assume for his/her health. Also, one has to explain the action to others, like family, friends, office, doctor, etc.).

The peripheral route comes into play when motivation is low and ability to attend is poor. People also tend to use the peripheral route, when they are distracted by other tasks, like eating while viewing TV ads, or are tired, like a long hard day at work, or are uncomfortably placed, like travelling in a bus train, standing, or when the messages are hard or incomplete.

The Heuristic and Elaboration Likelihood models have similar explanations (refer Figure 5.3), but their language and expressions are different.

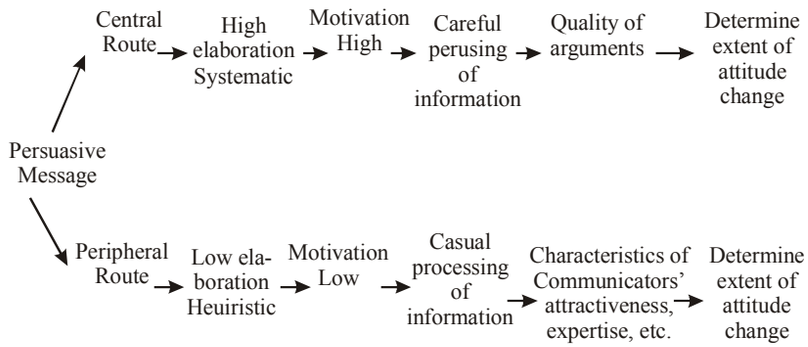

Fig. 5.3 *Heuristic and Elaboration Likelihood Models*

The extent of attitude change is based on the motivation to process information carefully or be taken in by external factors.

Resistance to Persuasion

It is seen that even health-related persuasive messages in which most people have vested interests, does not result in shift in attitudes in the desired direction. Why do people maintain their original attitudes even if it needs change? Several reasons have been identified to explain this phenomenon. Some of them are as follows:

- **Selective attention to information:** Attending to details that conform or support the existing attitudes, Eagly and Chaiken (1998). This means

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that we are tuned to focus on information that is in agreement with our attitudes and we tune out information that contradicts it. in short, tune into supportive information and tune out inconsistent information while attending to information. For example, we read in keeping with our own attitudes, vote in terms of our ideologies and see programmes in keeping with our preferences.

- **Selective evaluation of information:** Not only do we selectively attend to or seek out information on the basis of our existing attitudes; but we also tend to selectively evaluate information, that we take in. Accepting of supportive information and critical of non-supportive data; for example, those who believe in astrology are noticeably engaging in this type of evaluation. If a reasonable prediction is to be made, one would expect that people, when faced with contradictory evidence would adopt a more balanced or moderate attitude. The opposite point of view is known as the Belief polarization hypothesis. This states that people would dismiss evidence that is contrary to their existing attitudinal position and obtain support from evidence that is consistent with their views. Studies done by several researchers support this phenomenon. Mixed evidence of importance to people makes them become even more strongly entrenched in their attitudes. Religion is an illustration of this process in daily living.

  Extending this Ditto and Lopez (1992) found that patients who receive reports diagnosing that they are unhealthy, tend to downplay the seriousness of the diagnosis, the validity of the tests and so on.

- **Previous commitments:** These also lead to resistance to persuasion; for example, political allegiances are often passed from parents to children. Because of the family background, many youngsters are deeply enmeshed in their attitudes. One of the ways to change attitudes in such a situation is to get people to make and accept public commitments on an attitudinal matter. Kiesler (1971) found support for this attitudinal change variable. Public commitments increase resistance to persuasion. This is explained using the thought polarization hypothesis. Tesser et al. (1915) analysed people's attitudes towards social issues like legalizing prostitution. They made participants to think about the issue for a little while. Then they requested the participants to give a second rating on the subject. As a routine, it was found that they got stronger ratings towards the issue the second time. This happened with both the opponents and proponents of the chosen attitude.

- **Extended thoughts and attitudes:** More extended thoughts tend to produce more extreme and entrenched attitudes. However, if there was no pre-existing knowledge or motivation to think about an attitude, increased thinking could yield a more altitude, about a given issue.

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- **Knowledge and resistance:** The ELM approach stated that prior knowledge makes us scrutinize messages more closely. Thus, people with greater knowledge do resist persuasive messages, as compared to those who have less knowledge on a given topic. Wendy and Wood (1982) found that the less informed shifted their position more following persuasive messages, than those who were well informed.
- **Attitude inoculation:** This analogy has been borrowed from biology. It implies that small doses of attacks on one's belief system, prior commitments and knowledge structures, provide us with immunity against larger, later attacks. This becomes the basis of resistance. This was proposed and studied by McGuive and Papageorgis (1961) and found to hold. Resistance occurs due to the pre-existing attitudes, knowledge, commitment and attitudinal inoculation.

5.5.1 Cognitive Dissonance

When we are faced with a choice and we opt for one, we still have some regrets about what we did not choose. There are times we do or say things against our own convictions. Both these are examples of conditions that create feelings of discomfort caused by conflicts between various beliefs/ attitudes that we hold. Sometimes the conflict arises due to the inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour; for example, some people love animals, but still are non-vegetarians.

Dissonance is the struggle a person experiences when inconsistencies occur between attitudes that we hold, or between our attitudes and actions. Dissonance can be seen as a motivational state. Individuals experiencing dissonance are motivated to reduce it, also, it produces a feeling of discomfort. There are three ways in which dissonance can be reduced and they are as follows:

(i) Change your attitudes and/or behaviour, to make them consistent; for example, being married to a person, one does not like. Change the attitude towards the partner and start believing that she/he is not unlikable or walk out of the marriage. Both these processes would lead to reduction in the conflict.

(ii) Obtain or recruit new information that supports one's attitude or behaviour; for example, thinking, 'Compared to my friends' married life, my partnership is indeed tolerable,' or so many of my friends have divorced and ended a bad marriage. So there is nothing wrong about divorce.'

(iii) Minimize the importance of the conflict. For example, 'I have lived for twenty-five years with someone whom I do not like. For the rest of my life, these conflicts do not matter. I will manage, somehow.'

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One of these three ways would reduce the dissonance and bring in a sense of balance. The theory of cognitive dissonance was proposed by Leon Festinger in 1957.

Change of one or both attitudes are needed for reducing dissonance. Change follows the path of least effort, as in other situations. Psychologist, Aronson, Fried and Stone (1991) carried out a series of studies involving forced compliance. This involved getting people to do or say something they did not believe in. They used health related issues for inducing hypocrisy or lying, like safe sex. A group of participants had to encourage others to practice these responsible sexual behaviour. Simultaneously, they were reminded that they themselves have not always practiced what they are now advocating. This would generate dissonance. This can be reduced by changing their attitudes about safe sex. This was revealed when 85 per cent of these participants bought contraceptive devices the next time they engaged in sex. This reduced their lying hypocritical attitude besides their actions.

Psychologist, Aronson and Mills gave subjects in two conditions, large and small rewards for engaging in behaviour that was counter to their held attitudes. The experiment consisted of two sets of female college students. One group had to undergo a severe embarrassment test to join the group. The other set of women were put through a milder test of embarrassment. Finally, the members of both the groups were told that they cleared the test and were allowed to join. The severely embarrassed group seemed to enjoy the task for which they enrolled with difficulty. The other group that went through milder difficulties to enter the group did not find the task that they were ultimately to perform much to their liking. The tasks that both the groups had to perform were dull and uninteresting.

The severely initiated group had a lot of dissonance because of the following two inconsistent attitudes that they held:

(i) Underwent a severe initiation

(ii) Had to perform a dull task, at the end

The severely embarrassed group changed their attitude towards the task, and perceived it as not so boring after all. In this way, the dissonance was reduced. The mildly initiated group had less dissonance because the intensity of the two attitudes (mentioned earlier) that they held was low.

In this condition, the dissonance was less, so they did not have any motivation to change their attitude towards the task, they were required to perform. Hence, they were able to view the task as dull because they put less into the situation. So people, who suffer more, justify it by thinking that they like what they have. In real life also one gets to see knowledge rewards lead people to believe that they like what they are doing. People working in corporate offices, that are demanding and leave little or no time for personal life, justify their lives (as the incentives are good) on the ground that they

enjoy their work hours, lifestyle, etc. Here, the attitude is changed, so as to reduce the conflict that could arise by not having time or leisure for self or family.

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Psychologist, Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) carried out a study in which they gave one group of subjects a small reward ($1) and another group ($20) for telling other participants—who were to come to participate in the study—that the tasks to do were interesting. In reality the task was a boring routine one like putting spools in a tray, taking them out and putting them back. This had to be done for half an hour.

Later, both sets of participants were asked to indicate their own liking for the tasks. This involved outright lying. The group that received $1 to lie, reported liking the task more than the group that was paid $20. This was because the former group had more dissonance as they had to lie for a small amount, while the group that was paid more justified their lying in terms of their larger reward. The less paid group had experienced more dissonance. So they had to change their attitude towards the dull task and perceive it as not so uninteresting in order overcome their dissonance.

Less leads to more effect was demonstrated by this study. More attitudinal change comes when one has received a small reward. The smaller the inducements, the greater the change in attitude. However, these predictions are valid only when a free choice condition exists. People, who have to accept smaller salaries because of limited opportunities, are not going to change their attitudes towards the work they have to engage in.

Does inconsistency really cause dissonance? Cooper and Schier (1992) are of the opinion that dissonance and the motivation to reduce it, primarily comes from feelings of responsibility for negative outcomes. So when people are told that their attitude-discrepant behaviour does not lead to harmful effects, lesser attitude change occurs, like lying helps someone, but does not harm others.

If there is no dissonance, there is no possibility of attitude change. We still believe that lying is bad, but not when we do it under special circumstances (with a view to helping someone). When people recognize that their different attitudes or attitudes and behaviour do not fit together neatly, some discomfort or pressure to change arises. This is reduced in several ways to obtain a reduction in the feelings of unpleasantness.

Check Your Progress

7. What are the ways in which dissonance can be reduced?
8. State the premise of the Heuristic–systematic model.

5.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Knowledge function helps us to organize our understanding of the social world. This is the basis of how we attend to store, remember and retrieve information pertaining to a given object.
2. Attitude is an important part of our lives because it helps to us identify rewarding and threatening objects. Attitudes are the reason why we choose to belong to certain groups. They protect from unpleasant realities.
3. Attitude formation takes place through association, punishment and modelling.
4. In terms of attitude learning, even before our object is recognized, the negative emotions associated with it are aroused; for example, the names of people belonging to a particular group could arouse negative emotions long before the members of the group are even encountered. This is known as subliminal conditioning.
5. The Theory of Reasoned Action suggests that people quite consciously and deliberately choose one form of action, as opposed to another. These subjective norms are made up of what others will (or will not) accept or approve as a course of action.
6. Attitudes are sometimes inconsistent. This also creates problems for the smooth link between attitudes and behaviour; for example, we may like certain traits in a person, but dislike certain habits in them. This sometimes makes it hard to develop friendship with such a person.
7. Dissonance can be reduced in the following ways:
   (a) Change your attitudes and/or behaviour, to make them consistent.
   (b) Obtain or recruit new information that supports one's attitude or behaviour.
   (c) Minimize the importance of the conflict.
8. Heuristic–systematic model was proposed by psychologist, Chaiken (1980). These models are similar in essence though their language is different. In the heuristic model, the peripheral route of persuasion is dominant.

5.7 SUMMARY

- An attitude is an evaluation of an object or a person(s). It shapes our social perceptions and behaviour and it can be positive negative or neutral.

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- Attitudes are made up of several dimensions, which are bipolar in nature; for example, specific or general, strong or weak, simple or complex like religion, known or unknown, linked to action or unlinked to action.
- Attitudes also involve cognitions. These include the knowledge about the object, as well as beliefs, ideas, memories and images.
- Knowledge function helps us to organize our understanding of the social world. This is the basis of how we attend to store, remember and retrieve information pertaining to a given object.
- Attitudes help us to express our cherished values. This is usually carried out in groups made up of people who reinforce and support the attitudes.
- The holding of a particular attitude helps us save ourselves the acknowledgment of certain unpleasant truths about ourselves.
- Attitudes sensitize and alert us to objects that are rewarding to us. These objects are then sought after.
- Attitude is considered to be the central theme in social psychology. Generally, it refers to an individual's evaluation about the social world; the extent to which people have favourable or unfavourable reactions to any issues, ideas, persons, social groups or objects.
- Social learning theory or SLT is the theory that suggests that people learn new behaviour through observational learning of the social factors in their environment.
- By and large, socialization is the process by which attitudes are learned. This is the process by which a child becomes an adult member of a given society.
- Classical conditioning is learning by association. The principle involved here is that when one stimulus occurs first and this is then consecutively followed by another, then the appearance of the first becomes the signal that the second would also occur.
- Judgements or evaluations occur all the time during social interactions. In real-life conditions, the classical conditioning model can be seen to apply directly to the process of acquiring attitudes.
- Attitudes are aroused by emotions, even when the object of affect is not well recognized.
- Procedural variations have been tried to establish different forms of control over a person's behaviour.
- It is obvious to expect a clear link between strong attitudes and behaviour. Strong attitudes tend to develop from direct experience, as

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compared to those passively learned from observation or narrations by others.

- Availability refers to the ease with which attitudes can be accessed, Fazio (1986). Anything that comes to mind readily has a greater influence over behaviour than those that are not easily recallable.
- Gibbons (1978) found that heightened self-awareness increases the likelihood of the attitude–behaviour model.
- Attitudes are sometimes inconsistent. This also creates problems for the smooth link between attitudes and behaviour; for example, we may like certain traits in a person, but dislike certain habits in them.
- The traditional approach to attitude change began with the Yale social psychologists in the 1950s.
- In cognitive approach to attitude change, the role of cognitions in bringing about change is central.
- It is seen that even health-related persuasive messages in which most people have vested interests, does not result in shift in attitudes in the desired direction.
- The traditional approach to attitude change began with the Yale social psychologists in the 1950s. They used the pre-post design to study the existing attitudes.
- In cognitive approach to attitude change, the role of cognitions in bringing about change is central.
- Dissonance is the struggle a person experiences when inconsistencies occur between attitudes that we hold, or between our attitudes and actions.
- Change of one or both attitudes are needed for reducing dissonance. Change follows the path of least effort, as in other situations.

5.8 KEY WORDS

- **Attitude:** It refers to an evaluation of an object or a person(s). It shapes our social perceptions and behaviour and it can be positive negative or neutral.
- **Availability:** It refers to the ease with which attitudes can be accessed.
- **Elaboration Likelihood (ELM) Model:** It refers to a model which works on the assumption that there are two routes to persuasion. The central route and the systematic route, which makes people think carefully and deliberately about the message.

- **Social Learning Theory:** It refers to a theory which suggests that people learn new behaviour through observational learning of the social factors in their environment.

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5.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the components of attitude?
2. Write a short note on the concept of social learning.
3. What are the types of instrumental condition?
4. List the criteria of observational training.
5. How does attitude act like heuristics?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the functions of attitudes.
2. How is attitude acquired from other people? Explain in detail.
3. Analyse the relationship between attitude and behaviour.
4. Discuss the traditional approach of attitude.
5. Explain the concept of cognitive dissonance.

5.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 6 PREJUDICE AND AGGRESSION

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6.0 INTRODUCTION

Prejudice is defined as a preconceived opinion which is not based on any actual experience or reason. It includes an unreasonable attitude which is resistant to rational influence. Gordon Allport has defined prejudice as ‘feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on, actual experience’.

Aggression is defined as overt form of social interaction with the intention of unpleasantness upon other individual or an intention to damage that individual. It may be a result of retaliation or provocation.

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In this unit, the components of prejudice and the theories of aggression have been discussed in detail. The relation between prejudice and gender has been highlighted. The causes of aggression and the steps to control and prevent aggression have also been analysed.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the nature of prejudice and discrimination
- Identify the components of prejudice and discrimination
- Explain the relation between prejudice and gender
- Discuss the theories of aggression
- Interpret the causes of aggression
- Identify the steps related to control and prevention of aggression

6.2 PREJUDICE

Prejudice and discrimination are often used interchangeably in daily speech. Yet, they are different. Prejudice involves a negative attitude towards the members of some social group, merely because of their membership in that group; for example, old people, mentally challenged people and widows. There is also an effective response involved in these negative attitudes. Discrimination is the unfair treatment of members of a given groups, because of their membership.

6.2.1 Nature of Prejudice and Discrimination

The following are the nature of prejudice and discrimination:

- Prejudice is a negative attitude while discrimination is prejudice in action. When there is a possibility of punishment, then the prejudice does not always lead to discrimination; for example, caste-based discrimination in public life is punishable and therefore held under control, but it operates in personal/social life.
- Some of our attitudes are ambivalent; they contain negative and positive elements; for example, attitudes towards working women.
- Prejudice being a special type of attitude (generally negative) it operates as a schema. This is a cognitive framework for organizing, interpreting, storing and recalling information, Fiske and Taylor (1984).

So, prejudiced individuals tend to notice, encode, store and remember certain kinds of information towards members of a particular group, that is consistent with their prejudiced orientation (Bodentausen and Wyer 1985).

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Components of prejudice and discrimination

Prejudice as an attitude has three components. The cognitive component includes the beliefs and expectations about members of a given group, as well as the way in which information is processed. The affective component refers to the negative feelings experienced by prejudiced persons when they are in the presence of members of the despised group. Even the thought of this is sometimes enough to arouse negative emotions. The behavioural component involves the tendencies to act in negative ways against the members of this group. This constitutes discrimination.

As prejudice and discrimination are frowned upon in modern, civilized life, it has driven both these inclinations underground. Thus, subtle ways in which they manifest are noticeable. Prejudiced people wish to harm the targets of their prejudice without any cost or difficulties for themselves. So, they discriminate in subtle ways, while concealing their negative attitudes. Three of these common forms of subtle discrimination are as follows:

(i) ***Withholding aid from people:*** Withholding aid from people who need it. For example, diverting development funds from the poor needy.

(ii) ***Engaging in tokenism:*** This involves engaging in trivial acts of favour giving to members of a prejudiced group, to deny any major affirmative actions towards this group. For example, hire a person who is physically challenged for an innocuous job, so that others need not be considered for major employment. Promoting one woman to a managerial position, to silence critics about sexual gender discrimination, is a good example of tokenism.

(iii) ***Reverse discrimination:*** People, who fit into a particular category, are given favours; for example, teachers grade students of a special category, more favourably in school not only as a way of encouraging them, but also because the expectations from such categories of students are low. So, average students of a given category are rated more favourably as compared to average students of the general category, Fayardo (1985).

6.2.2 Acquisition of Prejudice

Prejudice is seen to exist in all societies since time immemorial. It is an ever-present danger and a threat to any society as it is anti-development. Three perspectives can be used for understanding the origins of prejudice. They are as follows:

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(i) **The economic perspective:** According to this view, groups develop prejudices about one another and discriminate against each other, when they compete for material resources. Religious groups, caste groups, regional groups, language groups, gender groups and elite groups all carry out activities to protect their own interests by attacking those who are seen as threats to their existence.

(ii) **Realistic-groups-conflict theory:** Psychologist, Levine and Campbell (1972) proposed that groups confront each other over real economic reasons. Resources of the earth are limited; for example, oil, gold and water. People have to compete to access these valuable limited resources. When there is less to go around, people are afraid of losing what they have or wish to gain more, the competition intensifies. This theory also predicts that prejudice and discrimination are likely to be most among groups that stand to lose from another person's economic advancement. For example, working class Americans feeling most threatened by Indian techies. China showing territorial aggression in the Asian region. Ethnocentricity, religious intolerance, sexism are all manifestations of such realistic conflicts.

(iii) **The robbers and cave study:** An example of inter-group conflict in a summer camp for young children, seven to eleven years of age. Psychologist, Sheriff et al. (1961) carried out an ingenious field study to understand the phenomenon and the process involved in group conflict in a real-life situation. The study consisted of two groups of boys who were to participate in a summer camp. They were screened for being typical of middle class America. They were taken to a distant place and no contact with family and friends was allowed. They were parked in the wilderness and had no electricity and other basic amenities. They lived in tents. In the first phase of the experiment, all the boys engaged in camp activities like pitching tents, cooking and cleaning, besides playing games like basketball, swimming enacting skits and singing. The boys were divided into two groups. Soon each group developed cohesiveness, gave themselves the names Eagles and Rattlers and were all happy together.

In the second phase of the experiment, the two groups participated in a tournament. The winning team would receive medals and a prized camp possession—a pocket knife. The losing team would get nothing. The tournament involved baseball, tug-of-war, treasure hunt and such games. The groups were encouraged to compete as hard as they could.

As the tournament proceeded and the competition grew, the two groups were seen hurling names and abuses at each other. The beginnings of hostility were clear. From words, the hostilities descended to physical means. Fights in the dining areas were seen, raids into each other's cabins were frequent, etc.

The internal dynamics of the groups changed as the competitive struggle intensified. The members of their own group and their activities were perceived favourably, while those of the other group were perceived, negatively. In-group-out-group categorization had developed. The 'us-them' notions were clearly perceptible. In the two weeks of the camp, conflict arose, and the group members showed strong prejudice towards the other because they were competing for coveted prizes.

In the final phase of the experiment, the researchers (Sherif et al) attempted to reduce the negative feelings and reactions. Merely increasing the amount of contact between the groups, failed to improve the negativity between the groups. So, a new condition was created. They were told that their only source of drinking water was poisoned by some forest animal. They all had to pitch in and work together to clean up the water source. Hectic joint activities followed for the next two days. Both the groups worked closely to reach the goal. Here, the attempt was to attain their common super ordinate goal of cleaning the water source. Soon, the hostilities that had developed over the two weeks due competition gave place to cooperation to achieve their common goal. Once the water supply was cleaned, the boys of the two groups found themselves feeling and behaving like comrades, all over again. The tensions between the groups disappeared and friendships were seen to develop across the groups. Many were seen watching games played by others, in a sporting manner. The hostilities were absent and fun, and togetherness reappeared. The atmosphere was a happy and a non-conflict one.

This study demonstrated how competition for scarce resources can quickly lead to conflict and feelings of prejudice and thereafter give way to discrimination. Superordinate goals are those goals that transcend the interests of any single group and that which can be attained only, if the groups work together. This leads to focus on the common goal and the melting away of sub-group distinctions.

This economic perspective can be applied to see how intergroup relations in the world function. Teaching, research environmental causes, sports, culture, movies, etc., could be used for creating greater commonalities as a way of reducing hostilities. Mahatma Gandhi's need-based life is one of the alternatives, for reducing competition.

6.2.3 Direct Intergroup Contact and Recategorization: The Motivational Perspective

People very readily divide the world into 'us' and 'them' categories; the group that one belongs to is the 'in-group'; while those who belong to the other group are called 'out-group'. Even in fairly homogeneous groups, seemingly arbitrary and meaningless criteria are used for creating such distinctions. The categories may be as minimal as place of residence, school, occupation, etc. Further, the 'us' group are viewed in favourable terms, while the 'them'

group is seen in negative terms. So, they are disliked as they are possessing undesirable traits.

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Psychologist, Tayfel and Turner (1979) demonstrated this in their studies. Some of the members of the 'in-group' did not even agree to meet the others, even though the categorization appeared purely arbitrary. This suggests that prejudice may stem from our inherent tendency to categorize people into 'us' and 'them'. Why does this occur? Tayfel and others (1971) call this mentality an attempt to be a part of a group on the basis of bare-minimum characteristics; for example, those who work in the fourth floor, those who drive a car, as opposed to a bike and so on. Even when people do not know who the other members of one's group are, there is a distinct favouring of those who are of one's group, as compared to those outside the group.

This distinction once formed, and the basis is a substantial one, then the consequences can be enormous and often disastrous. Religious intolerance is the best example based on such a distinction. The 'us-them' categorization is a cognitive one. This helps us to organize the world around us in a quick and easy way. How does this distinction lead to favouring one's group and being negative to the other? For this motivational explanation is offered. Tayfel and Turner propose the social identity theory to explain this phenomenon. According to them, people desire their sense of identity not only from their own accomplishments, but also from those of the groups to which they belong; for example, people who studied in an Ivy League School in the US, people who belong to this political party and people who believe in democracy. Individuals seek to enhance their self-esteem by identifying with specific social groups. This strategy would work only if their own group is seen as being better than the other group(s). Since all groups carry out the same process, the final result is one in which every group sees itself as superior to their rivals. Prejudice arises out of the conflict of social perceptions. To distinguish it from realistic-resource based completion, Tayfel calls this social completion. So, by boosting the status of one's group, one stands to elevate one's own self-identity.

Our group identity is raised by perceiving other groups as being lesser. Several studies have supported these suggestions. Psychologists, Meindel and Turner (1985) observed that the need to enhance our self-esteem would be greater, after recent failure experiences. This led to situations where the out-groups were perceived in extremely negative ways. For example, internationally weak countries perceive and evaluate the more strong and prosperous ones with a lot of contempt and disdain and speak about themselves in morally, religiously and culturally superior. These are the origins of racial, ethnic, religious and sexist prejudices.

Psychologist, Caldini et al. (1976) saw the tendency to identify with winning teams in sporting events, as a support for boosting the self. This is seen as basking in reflected glory. This is why the victorious describe

themselves as 'we are the best', 'unbeatable' and so on. People buy T-shirts, mugs, caps, and other memorabilia, to identify with a group and feel good about themselves. While they rejoice in their group's achievements; they find denigration of the other group also satisfying. This is the prejudicial outcome of identification with one's group and their successes.

Frustration–aggression theory

One of the most common outcomes of frustration could be lashing out at objects of people in the vicinity. A frustrated motorist would honk more at other derivers on the road. Similarly, this principle suggests that when hardships exist in society, people are more prepared to display their prejudice and discrimination, than at moderate times. However, often it is not permissible to lash out at the real source of our frustrations. Here, we choose to displace our aggression on to suitable soft targets. For example, if we have a bad day at work we are likely to get angry at the smallest of things when we are back home. Kids, who are scolded by their teacher, take it out on their weaker siblings and so on. This claim is clearly visible. The frustration–aggression theory predicts that hardships in society could generate ill-will towards minority or less privileged groups in society; who by virtue of their weaker position, are perceived as safe and vulnerable targets. Lynching, rioting, sexual abuse of children, women, etc., are examples of activities carried out by the more powerful, but frustrated groups in society, against the weak. This is called scapegoating. Ethnic, religious and other barriers erected against foreigners in a country, is indicative of this phenomenon caused by frustration in one's own society. Many western countries find their workforce jobless due to outsourcing. India and China are viewed as job-stealers, by the developed countries.

The economic and motivational approaches give some explanations about the origins and unequal evaluations of the in-group and out-group as the basis for the development of prejudice and discrimination.

6.2.4 Cognitive Intervention Prejudice

We categorize everything. This serves the purpose of simplifying the world around us. Stereotypes help us in the categorization process.

Stereotypes conserve cognitive resources

Since the real world is far too big, unbelievably complex and very transitory, it is not possible to know anything at all in sufficient detail to deal with things in any meaningful way. Hence, the human mind reconstructs it into a simpler model so that it is more manageable, Liffman (1922). Stereotypes enable us to engage with these small-scale models. Psychologists, Macrae and Bodenhausen (2000) state that stereotypes are useful categories that help us process information efficiently. It is particularly useful when there

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is information overload, fatigue or distraction. Then the stereotype, shortcut come in very handy.

The downside of the use of stereotypes involves occasional inaccuracies and errors. It can lead to unfair and biased judgements as all people may not fit into a stereotype. The information that is processed based on stereotypes, leads to enduring attitudes, even in the absence of validity for holding them. This results in prejudicial evaluations. Also, stereotypes can distort perceptions.

Biased information processing

It is important to examine the processing that occurs leading to inaccurate convictions about people belonging to different groups. Psychologists, Dovidio, Evans and Tyler (1986) found that data relevant to a particular stereotype are processed more quickly as compared to irrelevant information. This also implies that a person holding a stereotype pays attention to specific information, ignoring other information. These may be consistent with the stereotypes held. If inconsistent information occurs, the attempt would be to reduce the discrepancy by recalling facts that are consistent with the existing stereotypes.

Stereotypes also determine that we remember and recall information that is consistent. Stereotypes support prejudicial evaluations by noticing information that is consistent with it. This result is the self-confirming of the stereotype. Therefore, exceptions make a person readily choose supporting information. Thus, the cognitive processing itself strengthens the presence and operation of stereotypes. They get confirmed by the selectivity of attention, storing, remembering and recalling. This firmly entrenches the prejudice.

Illusory correlation

This implies perceiving connections of relationship where none exist. This is an unfortunate cognitive process at work. When two distinct stimuli or events co-occur; they are perceived as correlated. For example, violent crimes and certain types of groups (migrant labourers) both these stimuli are distinct. These two categories are perceived as related to the crime. This is an instance of illusory correlation. Illusory correlation is an erroneous belief about a connection between events, characteristics or categories that are not related at all. It is the paired distinctiveness that stands out, because they co-occur, Hamilton Gifford (1976).

Negative events have distinct impact on our attention. If they are committed by certain distinct group members, like migrant labour, then the distinctiveness increases. Thus, it becomes doubly noteworthy. Thus, these two characteristics and categories are seen as related. These twin cognitive flaws also lead to the development of stereotypes and prejudice.

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Out-group homogeneity effect

We think of homosexuals, drug addicts' religious fundamentalists as a unitary group. The image of these groups is that the members of this group think act and behave alike. Men and women also perceive each other as a homogeneous group. We perceive all out-group members as very much alike. This is indeed a serious bias in the perceptions, we hold. So, out-group members are perceived and treated as representative of their group. In contrast, the in-group members are perceived to be different from each other. Each person has likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses and they are all clearly identified and perceived to exist. Out-group homogeneity is another type of bias, leading to prejudice.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Self-fulfilling prophecy means acting in a way that tends to support the original beliefs we hold. We behave towards certain group members in such a way that we almost elicit the types of behaviours that we expect from them. For example, teachers who believe that students belonging to certain groups have lowered intellectual capacities would inadvertently or consciously fail to provide good education. This in turn would lead to decreased scholastic performance. This result would confirm the belief that they hold about the given group and its members. Like the girl child in parts of India is perceived as a liability. So, the parents neglect her in terms of nutrition education, exposure and empowerment. This leaves her inadequate in life. This outcome strengthens their existing belief that the girl/woman is less competent and need more subordination. This supports and strengthens the myth that men should dominate over women, otherwise women would die. Some even use religious beliefs to keep women oppressed. When the oppressed renders her helpless, this vulnerability is then used as the legitimate reason to subjugate women.

By behaving in ways that are bound to extract the kind of responses one is expecting and when these expectations are met, the belief system gets truly enhanced. So, the proof for a belief is almost seen as being verified in reality-testing. Self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates the rule of mistakes. This is yet another cognitive error in the continuation of prejudice. The cognitive resources that result in the emergence and maintenance of prejudices are based on stereotypes or beliefs. The processes identified are the 'us' versus 'them' categorization. Viewing the 'us' group favourably and the 'them' group negatively leads to negative feelings about the other group.

Prejudicial evaluations continue due to out-group homogeneity in perceptions. Biased information processing occurs, whereby selective attention, retention and recall of stereotypic information occur. Then there is the twin mechanism of illusory correlation and pained distinctiveness that

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connect and maintain relationships that do not exist, in an erroneous manner, leading to the prevalence of stereotypical views.

Finally, we have the self-fulfilling prophecy that regulates many behaviours that almost validating the belief held by the perceiver. These are the cognitive processes that explain how prejudices come about and are maintained, even in the face of contrary information. Prejudice also enhances the self is terms of a member, because they see their group as superior to the other group. Economic, motivational and cognitive processes give rise to prejudices and their continued maintenance in people.

6.2.5 Competing Prejudice and Prejudice Based on Gender

Prejudice is a deadly poison that affects society. It drains the resources of any group. It is negative and unhealthy. Several plans of action have been studied and suggested, some of them are as follows:

- **Learning not to hate or have a prejudice:** Since bigotry has been learned from parents, teachers, friends, media and other such significant sources, (classical, instrumental conditioning and modelling), it is possible to unlearn the prejudices through these techniques. Parents and teachers can be sensitized about their role in the development of prejudices and discrimination. This awareness could lead to discouraging their wards from learning prejudiced attitudes.
- Teachers can provide opportunities for students to experience the unfair discriminations that can be faced if prejudice and discriminations are mounted on them, in role play situations.
- Through these procedures, the chain of hate can be broken. The result could be an understanding of the evils of prejudice and discrimination and thereby, a reduction in such behaviour and thinking.
- **Direct inter-group contact:** The presence of prejudice leads to segregation of people of both sides. The victims as well as the perpetrators. This separation could result in increasing the negative attitudes about each other. Since no social interactions exist between the two groups who are hostile to each other, neither gets to see the other in fair and non-prejudicial terms. Stephan (1985) proposed the contact hypothesis wherein the two group members could get better acquainted with the other and realize that they are similar to each other than was thought to be. People who are perceived to be similar are more likely to view each other favourably. Contact would also throw up inconsistent information on a regular basis. This could challenge the negative schema and change could arise. Direct contact would also lead to the destruction of the perception of out-group homogeneity. All these raise hope for attacking prejudices.

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However, a few conditions of contact must exist for prejudices to be lowered. They are as follows:

a) Contact must be between groups who are equal in terms of social, economic and task-related status. For example, similar vocations, incomes, education and other standing in society. Contact between owners of an industry and the employees are not on equal relationship. Here, contact would not help in prejudice reduction. If there is unequal status, the contact could lead to strengthening of the existing prejudicial attitudes.

b) Contact should involve cooperation and interdependence. These conditions would lead to the pursuit of shared goods. Hence, competition would case and each group might be more favourably disposed to the other. This can foster change.

c) The contact should occur on an informed note. This would make people shed their roles and expectations associated with it. This one-on-one interaction is ideal for breaking stereotypes and initiating changes.

d) The contact must happen in a setting where the group norm would favour equality and closer associations between the groups. For example, a sporting event, or a cultural meet.

e) The groups must consciously act in ways that disconfirm the stereotypes that are held by each other; for example, teachers can wear casual clothes and dance and display less rigidity, show more openness and friendliness besides engaging in activities that students, prefer (games, jokes, watching movies, going for picnics, etc. are suitable activities, for disconfirming prejudices).

f) Each person must view the member of the other group as typical representative of their respective groups. This would help in generalizing these pleasant contacts to other person and situations, also.

Psychologist, Cook (1985) found that prejudice between groups does get reduced if contact occurs in some or most of these conditions. In real life the cases of integrated schooling is an example of attempts at prejudice reduction, through direct contact. The concept of inclusive education also has this as the basis.

- **Mindfulness in thinking:** Since people are 'cognitive misers' in terms of processing information, we quickly categorize and allow the stereotypes to operate in thoughtless manner. This results in the maintaining of the existing prejudiced attitude. Since the group membership is the most important basis of the categorization, one fails to notice the other characteristics of the individual in question. So, to combat this, people are trained to see and behave more mindfully toward others.

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Psychologists, Longer, Bashner and Chanowitz (1985) taught children to think and act towards children with challengers in a thoughtful way. They found that those who were coached to adopt a mindful set demonstrated less prejudice towards this group of persons. This entire process aims at getting people to think of challenged persons in terms of their skills and abilities and not in terms of the social category to which they belonged.

Becoming aware of individuals and their particulars is a sure way to lessen prejudice that occurs due to mindless categorization.

Prejudice based on gender

The division of men and women is biological. However, the stereotypes involving the female gender, is highly culturally dependent. It is so because men are physically muscular and stronger, and women gentler and delicate, the traits associated with men and women are different. Men are seen as assertive, confident, decisive and ambitious while women are perceived as passive, dependent and indecisive. These are stereotypes and in keeping with these cognitive make up, positive traits are associated with men and negative traits with women. Once the stereotype is in place, the male group perceives himself as being superior to women. Differences in the stereotypes between men and women may be partly true, but the extent to which they exist are more a myth than, Eagly and Carli (1981).

6.2.6 Techniques to Reduce Prejudice

Some of the techniques to reduce prejudice are as follows:

- **Contact and Cooperation:** This technique arises from the work of social psychologist, Gordon Allport in the 1950s. Allport argued that interaction between members of conflicting groups reduces the prevalence and intensity of prejudiced beliefs and actions.
- **Identity and Categorization:** Sometimes recategorizing, decategorizing, or cross-categorizing identities helps in combating prejudice. For example, decategorizing people helps to fight against stereotypes by focusing on individuals. Similarly, through recategorizing people realize that two different groups are a part of a larger group, uniting them while celebrating their difference. Finally, cross-categorizing people helps decrease prejudice by identify an unrelated group affiliation they may share.
- **Feelings and Affect:** The use of role playing as well as asking people to empathize with others helps reduce prejudice.
- **Cognitive Approaches:** These approaches like reconditioning involve changing the way people think. Such approaches may entail thought suppression, retraining, creation of internal conflict, or social discomfort.

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Check Your Progress

1. What are cognitive approaches?
2. Define illusory correlation.
3. What are the components of prejudice?

6.3 THEORIES OF AGGRESSION

What do we mean when we say that Charley is an aggressive person? Aggression and aggressiveness have several different meanings in everyday speech—the actions of a brutal slayer or a successful salesperson—are we talking about the same thing?

6.3.1 Aggression: An Innate Tendency and an Elicited Drive

According to the psychological definition, aggression is any form of behaviour directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such harm.

(i) Aggression as an innate tendency

According to this explanation—which is the oldest—human beings are 'programmed' for violence.

Violence/aggression is biological

This explanation is also known as the instinct theory of aggression, so it is part of human nature to be aggressive. An Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud held the view that aggression arises from a powerful 'death-wish' that exists in every person. He called this as Thanatos. The desire of self-destruct is strong, but it is often directed against others. He also suggested that this instinct needs to be released periodically, failing which it could lead to violent outbursts. These hostile impulses that exist in every person accumulate over time. Freud's proposals were the result of the large-scale destruction that he witnessed during World War I. Contrary to Thanatos, is his formulation of the counter-concept of Eros. Eros is the wish to seek pleasure, love and procreate. These two opposing forces are powerful and exist side-by-side in their origins. Therefore, the link between sex and aggression is very potent and noticeable.

Sex and aggression go hand-in-hand

Psychologist, Konrad Lorenz (1966) won the Nobel Prize for his theory of fighting instinct that human beings share with the rest of the species and that aggression arises from this inherited tendency.

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Fighting enables population to be distributed widely and thereby get the maximum utilization of the natural resources. Even in today's world, people are aggressing over the resources of the earth—oil, water, land. Aggression is also related to mating behaviour. This ensures that the strongest and fittest would pass on their genes to the next generation. Here again, human beings seem to be wired wrongly. We can see that the world is inhabited by the less fit and incompetent. This group forms the bulk of world's population and they are also the most fertile.

Psychologist, R Ardrey (1976) extends Lorenz' position further to suggest that early, in human history, people who 'attacked' survived, the others 'starved' and perished. Therefore, he maintains that the human anatomy, physiology and psychological structures and functions are explicitly suited for hunting. So, there is a strong tendency to aggress and survive.

The sociobiologists, D Barash (1977) D M Buss (1991) believe that aggression as a social behaviour has its roots in evolution. This theory suggests that those behaviours that help in passing on the genes to the next generation would become more dominant in the species. This means that males, who are more aggressive, would be the winners in mate selection.

Aggression is in part an inherited biological trait

There is no unanimity on the validity of these perspectives. The innate theorists observe the prevalence of aggression across the world in support of their formulations. Their opponents uniformly argue against the universal existence of aggression, all over the world. Violence rates vary greatly across the different regions of the world—Norway is the least, USA is eight times more and New Guinea, 800 times more.

If aggression is instinctual, such high differences in prevalence rates cannot be adequately explained. Therefore, many social-psychologists reject the theory of innateness as the basis of aggression. However, modern studies do indicate the role of biological factors, leading to aggressive behaviour; for example, violent crimes are associated with biological conditions. So, biology is significant in aggression, but this does not imply that aggression is a universally inherited instinct. Thus, aggression is not a universally inherited tendency in human beings.

(ii) Aggression as an elicited drive

This is known as the drive theory of aggression, proposed by psychologist, Leonard Berkowitz (1988). According to him, aggression arises mainly from an externally elicited drive to harm or injure others. So, external conditions like frustration, humiliation give rise to a strong urge to engage in harmful behaviours. This is known as the frustration–aggression hypothesis.

Being thwarted or frustrated is common in everyday life. So, people are driven to being aggressive. Thus, this is crucial for aggression and not

innate tendencies, according to this theory. However, this theory also runs into difficulties when we observe individuals who do experience frustration but do not always display aggression. They handle frustration in other non-aggressive ways. Thus, we can say that frustration does not always result in aggression.

(iii) Aggression as a reaction to aversive events

The role of negative affect or emotions

There has been a clear link between aggressive behaviour and negative emotions. Often, unpleasant feelings and aggression have been seen to be correlated. We can remember the times when we became aggressive and recognize the situation that acted as the trigger. This notion is called the cognitive neoassociationist view (Berkowitz). This theory proposes that exposure to negative events (those one wishes to avoid) causes unpleasant feelings. In turn these feelings activate a fight and flight response. Aggressiveness could be dependent on several factors that are as follows:

(i) How painful the event is

(ii) Thoughts and memories of similar earlier events

(iii) The appraisal of the situation

There are several instances in daily life where instigations for aggression are present. If the above conditions operate, overt aggression could follow.

(iv) Aggression as learned behaviour

Pyschologist, Albert Bandura (1973) gave the social-learning view of aggression. This approach considers aggressive behaviour is learned, like any other form of social behaviour; aggression is largely the result of learning.

This suggests that aggression is not innate. Aggression is learned through direct experience (an earlier aggressive behaviour involved, a parent or teacher, beating a child). Here, the child has suffered aggression as a victim. He or she also saw the gains that aggression had, in the form of control, for the adult. So, he or she learns the type of aggression to be carried out and the payoffs that it provides. Further, he or she does not associate with any negative thoughts, as the parent/teacher is a venerated significant person in his or her life. Such people can do no wrong. So, beating is not perceived as being negative or undesirable. Thus, he or she learns how to aggress and that it is not wrong.

Another way in which aggression is learned is by observing the behaviour of others (social models) who display aggressive behaviours. The models can be real-life people—parents, teacher and friends or even those from fiction, movies and TV.

Bandura indicates that aggression is learned. Whether it would occur in each situation is dependent on the following:

(i) Past experience(s)

(ii) The current reinforcement for aggression

(iii) Social/cognitive perceptions of appropriateness of aggressive behaviour

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6.3.2 Determinants of Aggression

We will in this section discuss the determinants of aggression.

Others' actions determining our aggression

This friend of mine, that boss of my neighbour are the common reason for getting angry for what they have done or said. Something that other people do seems to be the reason for our anger. Sometimes, it is also what others fail to do that could trigger anger in us. Rarely factors like bad food or rainy weather affect our mood or make us angry.

Social conditions give rise to aggression

Psychologist, Buss (1961) studied aggression in the laboratory using an ingenious device called aggression machine. There was a teacher and a learner (The learner was the accomplice) while the teacher was the critical subject (whose aggression was studied). The teacher was to punish or reward the subject depending on the answers being incorrect or correct, respectively. The machine had knobs that were to deliver electric shocks to the students, if an error was committed. These knobs would indicate the level of shock that would be passed if operated. He or she got the learner to make errors and studied the extent to which his participants were willing to increase the levels of shock to punish the learner's mistakes. No shocks were delivered.

The experiment was a good measure of intent of aggression rather than aggression. The willingness of people to harm others is reflected in this study.

6.3.3 Frustration as the Cause of Aggression

Frustration can be understood as thwarting of goal-directed behaviour. If we are prevented from what we wish to get, frustration does arise. This could lead to aggression. Children throw things if not allowed to go out to play, some get upset and irritable if there is some office problem. All these are conditions that upset or frustrate a person and generate anger or aggression in them.

The greater the frustration, more intense is the aggression. To explain this phenomenon, psychologist, Dollard et al. (1939) first proposed the frustration-aggression hypothesis. His early theories were sweeping generalizations. The conclusions of the hypothesis are as follows:

(a) Frustration always leads to aggression

(b) Aggression always stems from frustration

Both these conclusions do not always hold. In real life, people always do not aggress when frustrated. Further, aggression can arise from causes

other than frustration as well. Berkowitz propounded a revised version of this hypothesis. He suggested that frustration does bring about negative feelings. Unpleasant experiences may cause aggression.

Negative feelings lead to aggressive behaviour

Direct provocation appears to be a reasonable explanation of aggression, especially when frustration that seems illegitimate or unwarranted (someone's whims, for example, boss denying leave unfairly) produces stronger aggression, than frustration as compared to expected frustration, that is seen as legitimate (for example, no leaves because all the leaves have been exhausted). It is perhaps in the former instance, the negative feelings aroused are stronger and this could trigger the aggression.

Even when negative feelings are generated, the aggressive tendencies are modified by the higher-level cognitive processes. According to Berkowitz, people would evaluate their situation and then decide whether aggression is appropriate or not. Hence, frustration does not always lead to aggression. Frustration may be one of the potential causes of aggression, but it is by no means the only one.

6.3.4 Direct Provocation

Saying something that really hurts or physically assaulting a person, are examples of direct provocation for anger. Since one is already the victim of aggression from another person, the victim could retaliate in an equal or even greater measure. This is the mechanism for the upward spiraling of aggression.

Unreasonable behaviour, direct insults, slander and the like, top the list of anger-provokers. However, even in the face of direct provocations, the interpretation assigned to the other person's statements could mediate in lessening the provocation. In such contacts, aggression in a retaliatory manner may not occur at all.

6.3.5 Exposure to Media Violence

There is an abundance of violence to be seen and read about in the mass-media. Harming others is a typical fare in most movies, in shows and even televised sporting events.

Let us stop and consider, does exposure to media-violence increase aggression among viewers.

Various psychologists, Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) carried out the classic study called Bo-Bo Doll Experiment. One group of children were exposed to a film clip, where they watched an aggressive model in action. Another group watched a non-aggressive model, film clip. Later, in a free play situation, the group that watched the aggressive model became more aggressive, as compared to those children who viewed the non-aggressive model.

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The aggressive group of children not only displayed more aggression but acquired new ways of aggressing from the model in the clip. The levels of aggression were also higher for the aggressive model viewing group.

Psychologist, Jacques Leyens (1975) carried out a field study to observe the effects of prolonged media-violence on children in natural conditions. The results confirmed that the greater the violence viewed, the greater aggression displayed.

Prolonged media-exposure to violence, results in higher levels of aggression. It was also found in another study that those who were waiting in a line to watch a violent movie, also scored higher on aggression scale, than those who waited to see a non-aggressive film. Further, those who had just viewed a violent movie had a higher score on the aggression scale, as compared to those who had just viewed a non-violent movie.

Not only does viewing violence increase the tendency to aggress; but those desiring to see violent movies already have an inclination for aggression. Thus, viewing violent movies, increases the already existing tendencies for aggression.

Viewing sports that have a large component of violence in them, (kick boxing, wrestling, rugby, ice hockey, soccer) also leads to increase in aggression among fans and viewers. This explains hostile reactions like making bon-fires and stampedes after certain games. In another disturbing study, it was found that the amount of violence watched during childhood is related statistically to their levels of aggression as adults.

Taken, these findings suggest that there is moderate support for media exposure to violence as contributing to the aggressive behaviours along with other factors. Exposure to media violence can facilitate similar behaviour among viewers. This is indeed disturbing.

The role of aggressive cues

A doll says play with me, feed me, dress me and be gentle with me, by its appearance. A ball indicates that it should be tossed, bounced and kicked. A gun suggests shoot, using me. This could well be a case of the trigger pulling the finger. The presence of aggressive cues could be one of the key factors in aggression.

Aggressive cues could elicit aggression. The cues can lead to actual aggression when a person is angered or troubled or otherwise ready to fight or attack. A study by Berkowitz and others found that angry or agitating weapons and other similar objects do act as aggressive cues to facilitate aggression.

Aggression can come from within as well as from without

We have already studied that media violence impacts aggression. Now, the question that arises is why does it occur and how the impersonal media can

have such an effect on human behaviour. Several factors have been identified that are as follows:

(i) Viewing media violence weakens our inhibitions (there is a removal of restraints).

(ii) Media exposure suggests to the viewers newer techniques for harming others.

(iii) After-viewing aggression that can prime aggressive thoughts and memories. The aggressive schema that has been activated can increase interest in violent movies/actions.

(iv) Repeated exposure to violence can desensitize viewers to the consequences of harming others.

Viewing violence often lowers emotional sensitivity to pain and suffering. Sexual violence viewing leads to further disturbing outcomes. Exposure to media violence enhances the possibility of overt aggression.

6.3.6 Heightened Arousal

Let us now discuss heightened arousal.

The emotion-cognition-aggression link

When we are in a hurry and we experience a series of events that are further delaying us (our car keys are misplaced, we need to fuel-up the vehicle and then we run into an unexpected traffic jam) we may find ourselves irritated and our anger mounting. This is known as heightened arousal and it could increase the possibility of aggression. Psychologist, Zillmann (1988) described this with his excitation transfer theory.

According to this theory, whenever the human system is aroused physiologically, the arousal takes time to get dissipated. So, some of the arousal that persists is carried over from one situation to another. Therefore, even a minor annoyance could trigger a more intense reaction, than is warranted by the situation. For example, flipping at a small thing, which is otherwise minor. Such reactions occur in the following two conditions:

(i) The person is unaware of the residual arousal.

(ii) The person is aware of the arousal, but attributes it to current events.

This also leads to the de-individualization of the person who displays reduced awareness and therefore, a decreased concern for the social norm of the given situation. So, the external attribution helps in reducing personal responsibility for the aggressive outburst.

Excitation transfer could enhance aggression

There is a complex interaction between emotion-cognition and aggression. The relationship between emotions and thoughts and thoughts and emotions

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have been well established. So, we need to examine the connection between emotions, thoughts and aggression.

In a study, one group received negative information about a teacher, prior to their participating in an experiment. The other group received it after the participation. A control group received no information at all. In all the three conditions, the teacher behaved rudely with the participants. Those who were informed before showed the least arousal while those who received no information at all showed the maximum arousal, and those who received the details after the experiment, showed intermediate levels of arousal.

High levels of arousal affect our thoughts about other's behaviour and this influences our tendencies to agree against them. So, emotions affect our thoughts and these two together determine the extent of aggression that would be displayed.

Sexual Arousal and Aggression

Love and hate are the two sides of the same manifestation is a well-known claim. Love is libidinal in nature and involves sexuality as a component. Passionate sex includes a lot of aggression. This means when sexual feelings are increased, it results in a state of intense arousal. The relationship between heightened arousal and aggression, has already found empirical evidence. For example, the desire to hurt one's lover or get hurt by the sexual partner—sadism and masochism—represent the two extreme forms of these tendencies.

Several studies have explored this phenomenon of sexual arousal and aggression. Mild levels of sexual arousal caused by viewing or reading about some mild passionate episodes, lead to reduced desire for aggression. Later, strong levels of sexual arousals generated by explicit pornographic viewing have been associated with increase in subsequent aggressive behaviour. This curvilinear relationship has been explained by a two-component model, suggested by Zillmann. According to this formulation, exposure to erotic stimuli produces the following two effects:

(i) Increased arousal.

(ii) It influences current affective states (emotions), that is, it induces positive or negative feelings.

Mild erotic materials enable mild levels of sexual arousal. They are generally pleasant in nature. So, such exposures reduce later aggression. Explicit erotic materials generate strong arousal levels. Further, many people evaluate some of the passionate scenes viewed as aversive or objectionable. This produces a great deal of negative affect. This could give rise to increased aggression. There is a lot of support for the two-factor theory of sexual arousal and aggression. The relationship between sexual arousal and aggression exists clearly, but it is a complex one.

Effects of explicit displays of sexual behaviour have invariably a lot of violence mixed in it. Women are generally the victims and they are shown to be brutalized, tortured and ill-treated in cruel ways. This type of violence viewing has ill-effects and the consequences are often dangerous.

The effects of violence pornography

The following are the ill-effects of violence pornography:

(i) It increases the tendency in men to aggress against women.

(ii) Exposure to violent pornography leads to the development of an insensitive attitude towards sexual violence.

(iii) This callous attitude makes people view crimes such as rape, as less serious and also have little sympathy for the victims. (It makes many men believe that women almost ask to be raped.)

(iv) It also suggests that these consequences can also occur even after watching purely violent movies, where sexuality is not explicit.

Conclusion

It is the violent content (aggression against women), more than explicit sexuality that is responsible for aggression. Since most violent movies have elements of sexuality thrown in, and as most violence is against women, it is possible to predict that violence against women is bound to increase with more exposure to violent pornography.

Check Your Progress

4. State the premise of cognitive neoassociationist view.
5. Why is it said that aggression as a social behaviour has its roots in evolution?

6.4 ALCOHOL AND AGGRESSION

Generally, alcohol and aggression are seen as a heady mix. It is often seen that those who drink within legal limits (as per norms of alcohol in the blood stream) respond more aggressively as compared to those with less alcohol or no alcohol at all in the body. Following two reasons are assigned for this increased aggression:

(i) Alcohol affects the brain and those parts that control emotions and rage. Our emotions get free from control. They are simply no longer capable of restraint.

(ii) Alcohol also lessens the inhibitions against aggression and sexual behaviour, to some degree.

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In another study, it was found that when a situation is non-threatening, alcohol intake does not increase aggression. However, confrontation could lead to aggression. This explains why provocation or competition in a bar or pub produces brawls readily. The picture of alcohol and aggression is not decisive, but the effect of alcohol on aggression suggests the following:

(i) Alcohol consumption does not automatically increase aggression.

(ii) Many individuals can regulate their behaviour, suitably.

(iii) Alcohol can increase aggression, if appropriate social cues are present (for example, provocation by others, or aggressive role models).

(iv) Alcohol can make people aggressive if they realize that the potential victim has no means of retaliation (for example, women, children and seniors). Alcohol is dangerous only under specific conditions.

6.4.1 Personal Causes of Aggression: Types of Behaviour Patterns

Some individuals are more prone to being aggressive than others. Some of the key personal factors that promote aggressive behaviour can be categorized under Type A and Type B behaviour patterns (Glass, 1977) (refer Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 *Type A and Type B Behaviour Patterns*

Type A	Type B
1. Extremely competitive	Less competitive
2. Always in a hurry	Not always in a hurry
3. Irritable and aggressive	Calm and not aggressive

These two personality types represent the two extreme ends of a continuum. Generally, people can be categorized as belonging to one type or the other. Type A people are competitive and therefore engage in aggressive behaviours. This is to further their own goals. They are also more hostile and have been found to show more child abuse or spouse abuse. These behaviours are not culture specific. Bus drivers in the USA were compared with those in India, after being classified into personality Types of A and B. Their on-the-job behaviour and their previous records in terms of accidents were studied. The behaviours of Type A and Type B drivers were similar in both countries (Evans, Pulsane and Carrere, 1987). The studies are put together in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 *Behaviour of Type A and Type B Drivers in India and USA*

	Type-A drivers	**Type-B drivers**
1.	Drive faster	Drive slower
2.	Honk more	Honk less
3.	Pass other vehicles more	Pass other vehicles less
4.	Frequently stepped on breaks	Stepped on breaks less
5.	Involved in more aggressive encounters	Less involved in aggressive encounters
6.	More accident prone	Less accident prone

In occupations where stress and frustration are likely, it may be wise not to hire Type-A individuals. The Type-B people would be happier and less dangerous to themselves and to others.

6.4.2 Perceiving Evil Intent in Others and Shame Proneness

Another personality characteristic is the tendency to perceive hostile intent in others' actions, even where none exists. This is termed as hostile attributional bias. Individual differ in this attributional tendency by virtue of their personality.

Individuals, who see evil intent where none exist, are going to show great aggressive tendencies. Those who perceive malice in other people's actions are bound to respond with greater aggression.

Shame proneness and aggression

Shame is a negative evaluation of the self when a flaw in an individual lead to a consequence and it is available for public scrutiny; for example, cheating someone. If caught it is a shameful deed because others get to know of it, the self-worth of the cheater is lowered. This is greater in a collectivistic society, like India. The shame is experienced because others, who matter, got to know about it.

In contrast is guilt; here the person who commits a wrong act is aware of it. Others may or may not come to know of it. So, guilt is a moral transgression. Guilt is manifest in the form of an intra-psychic conflict. A conflict between a person's ego and the super-ego (moral-keeper) in Freud's psychic structure, shame is the outcome of intra-social conflict if societal norm is violated.

Both shame and guilt generate negative feelings. Studies demonstrate that when people experience shame, they also experience hostility and anger. They are angry at themselves for having behaved in a way that brought about the shame. They also view others as the cause for feelings of shame in themselves to occur. This is because others are found to disapprove of the particular behaviour and cause humiliation. This leads to hostility being directed at others. Since shame is a powerful emotion, the negative effect is intense, often disproportionate to the triggering events. So, such people blame others for their own negative feelings and become angry at them. Therefore, persons who are prone to shame are also likely to aggress according to Tangney, 1992 (refer Exhibit 6.1).

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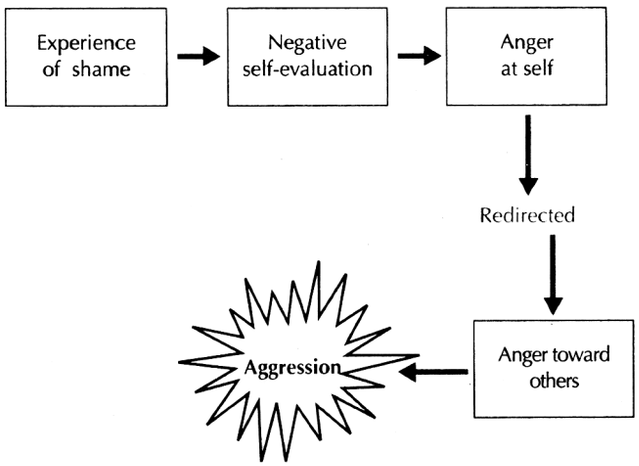
Exhibit 6.1 *Shame and Aggression*



Source: Based on suggestions by Tangney et al., 1992.

Studies do support such a formulation. Shame is potentially harmful to the person experiencing it and to others around him as well. Shame-prone individuals are also more likely to display aggression.

Value orientation and aggression: The Patri model

Exhibit 6.2 *Value Orientation and Culture*

Value Orientations and Culture

	Asian / Indian culture	*Western culture*
1.	Adaption/accommodation to the world.	Controlling the world
2.	How to live	What to live for
3.	Collectivism/sense of family/community	Individualism
4.	Training/socialisation for dependence/interdependence	Training/Socialisation for independence
5.	Shame orientation for control/ regulation	Guilt-orientation for control/regulation
6.	Conflicts primarily	Conflicts mainly Psycho-social intra-psychic
7.	Circular/cyclicial concept of time	Linear concept of time
8.	Conservative/traditional	Liberal/Non-traditional
9.	Limited freedom for individual growth	Unlimited freedom for individual growth
10.	Passive/submissive/ cooperative	Assertive/domineering/ competitive
11.	Feudalistic orientation	Democratic orientation
12.	Dominant values are security, obedience and sensitivity to feelings	Dominant values are freedom, achievement and neutrality in terms of feelings
13.	Society structured on direct personal relationships	Society built on legal and contractual relationships
14.	A hierarchical and Spiritual orientation	A horizontal and pragmatic orientation

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Renowned authors, Vasantha R. Patri and Neelakant Patri, in the their book *Essentials of Effective Communication*, have presented the profile of the Asian/Indian people as opposed to the Westerners in terms of their value orientation (refer Exhibit 6.2). Here, the shame orientation as compared to the guilt orientation is proposed as a major behavioural control source for the Asian group. The collectivistic orientation of the Asian societies also supports this formulation. Most of the people in the Western society are regulated more by guilt and less by shame in their social behaviours; while the dominant part of society in Asian societies' behaviour is controlled more by shame and less by guilt. This in an indirect way also accounts for the prevalence of rampant corruption in daily life in Asian societies.

6.4.3 Gender Differences in Aggression

Legends and folklore suggest that males are more aggressive than females. Crime bureaus also report more violent behaviour in males, than females. The research evidence seems to suggest a mixed result. Males display a lot of physical aggression; while females show a lot of indirect aggression (spreading rumours, harmful gossip, psychological harassment, etc.). Females are more manipulative while males are more direct in their expression of aggression.

Men are less guilty or anxious about their aggressive behaviours; while women show concern about their own safety when thinking of engaging in aggressive actions. This is an attitudinal factor. Women and men differ in their willingness to aggress in interpersonal situations. Is there a biological difference leading to this or is it largely due to socialization influences?

Role of hormones and sexual orientation

Though socialization does teach men to be more aggressive and women to be more cooperative; the role of biology cannot be overlooked.

Several studies have identified the male hormone testosterone, being present in high concentration in males and this is associated with aggression. This was also found to be true of both heterosexual and homosexual males. In fact, it was observed that the greater the levels of concentration of testosterone in their blood, the greater the tendency to engage in physical and impulsive aggression. In females, higher levels of testosterone tended to decrease their tendencies to engage in different types of aggression. Lesbian women however are reported to be less likely to engage in physical aggression than heterosexual women.

Males by virtue of their biology tend to demonstrate more aggression than females. This by no means suggests that males would show more aggression than females under all conditions.

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Interaction between hormones and personality (Testosterone and Type A Behaviour)

As higher levels of testosterone and Type A persons are associated with higher levels of aggression, it was hypothesized that both these would influence aggression.

The findings are summarized as follows:

- High levels of testosterone: Aggressive behaviours
- Type A personality: Aggression
- Type B personality: Lowered aggression
- Lower levels of testosterone: Decreased aggression

Males with Type A personality and higher levels of testosterone engage in more aggressive behaviour. Also, we must note that aggression is influenced by learning, experience, cognition and individual differences. All these factors interact in bringing about aggression.

6.4.4 Types of Aggression

Aggression can be classified in different ways. Firstly, it can be classified based on intent. Such as:

- **Emotional or Impulsive Aggression:** This is the type of aggression that at occurs with only a small amount of forethought or intent and that is determined primarily by impulsive emotions.
- **Instrumental or Cognitive Aggression:** This is the type of aggression that is intentional.

Aggression can also be classified based on action. Such as:

- **Verbal Aggression:** Physical aggression is aggression that involves harming others physically—for instance hitting, kicking, stabbing, or shooting them.
- **Non-verbal Aggression:** Non-verbal aggression is the type of aggression that does not involve physical harm. Non-physical aggression includes verbal aggression (yelling, screaming, swearing, and name calling) and relational or social aggression.

Check Your Progress

6. What is emotional or impulsive aggression?
7. Define non-verbal aggression.

6.5 PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF AGGRESSION

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There are various techniques to prevent aggression. Since aggression results from the interplay of several factors like learning, external events, cognition, and individual differences; it raises the hope of being able to manage or control aggression. Aggression can be prevented, or at least reduced.

6.5.1 Punishment

Since the dawn of civilization punishment has been used as a method to deter violence. Most countries have established laws for handling severe crimes. In some ways, these are effective in other ways, they have failed. Punishment used in a scientific way does have some merit as an effective deterrent.

Conditions for punishment to be effective

The following are the conditions for the punishment to be effective:

- It must be prompt and follow the aggression as closely as possible.
- It must be strong; the magnitude of the punishment must be sufficient to render it highly aversive, to the receiver.
- It must be certain to follow aggression. The punishment should be expected to follow aggression (every time it occurs), Bower and Hilgard (1981).

These conditions are rarely met in the criminal justice proceedings of most countries. In some countries like India, rarely are criminals apprehended, tried or convicted on time. So punishment has failed to deter violence.

6.5.2 Catharsis

Catharsis means blowing off steam or ridding the system of the aggressive impulses. Many societies believe that purging the system of violent and aggressive tendencies, does have the benefit of reducing aggression/violence. Catharsis means allowing people an opportunity to participate in activities wherein they can give expression to their anger and hostility. Such an environment must be safe, so that the anger reduction can occur, even after it has been demonstrated. Such expressions of anger and hostility have the following two benefits:

(i) Facilitate reduction of emotional tension.

(ii) Since the anger is expressed in a safe environment, the likelihood of more dangerous forms of aggression gets mitigated.

Some of the most common types of cathartic activities are as follows:

(i) Physically exhausting activities: These help in reducing arousal statistics and thereby lowering aggressive tendencies. There are hard

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fought games devised by every society that act as a catharsis; for example, soccer, hockey, kabbaddi, athletics, etc. Not only do they instill a spirit of fair play and competition, but also help-in reducing aggressive impulses. However, these have been found to be temporary.

Some of the findings seem to suggest that catharsis can even lead to provoking hostile impulses. Viewing violence in cinema, television, internet, etc., have been found to increase these impulses. The feelings of anger and hostility do tend to reappear, after the energy-draining activities are over. Catharsis is not effective in producing long-term reduction in aggression.

(ii) **Cognitive interventions:** It sometimes helps if we say 'sorry' and give explanations. Many people get angry for being let down or for being treated unfairly or taken for granted.

Being late for personal and professional meetings is one such case. Waiting because of delay at the other end, is indeed annoying. As the waiting period increases, anger could set in. One of ways to lessen such anger is to offer sincere apology for the delay. It has to be seen as genuine. Then, the delay may be condoned, and the anger may be reduced. Giving an explanation for the delay could be added to the apology, for example, the car did not start, there was some trouble getting the machine and got caught in an unexpected traffic jam.

Giving reasons would help further in reducing the anger felt. If the reasons are specific and reasonable, it would work, but if it is an alibi for being late, it could infuriate those waiting further. So, offering apologies and explanations does have some effect in aggression reduction and preventing overt aggression.

6.5.3 Other Techniques of Reducing Aggression

Some other techniques for reducing aggression, as given by psychologist, Baron (1983) are as follows:

(i) Use of non-compatible response strategy

(ii) Training in social skills

(iii) Exposure to non-aggressive models

Two of the three techniques are described and are as follows:

- **Exposure to non-aggressive models:** Just as exposure to aggressive models leads to learning aggression, the counter position is that viewing non-aggressive models should lead to a reduction in aggression. Non-aggressive models demonstrate restraint in the face of provocation. Several studies have been done to demonstrate that aggression can be reduced by planting non-aggressive models during threateningly explosive situations.

- **Social skills training:** We like ourselves better when others like us. One of the major reasons for aggression in daily living is the poor or insufficient social skills that we possess; for example, we do not know how to respond to provocations without blowing our top. People's flaming anger is often a needless response to a remark or an action from another person. Often the reactions are exaggerated. Again, we are unable to express our wishes or fears to others, so that they are easily understood by others. Thus, there is a lot of frustration or anger when our expectations are not met. This happens so often at home and at work, and it leads to needless show of temper, etc.

Our emotional sensitivity to other people's feelings is also low. Therefore, many of us end up hurting others or get hurt ourselves in turn by the insensitive remarks made by others. Insensitivity is another big reason for running into interpersonal difficulties and getting angry. Social skill training can go a long way in reducing interpersonal aggression, hugely.

6.5.4 Cognitive Intervention and Other Techniques

Modern behavioural and cognitive-behavioural interventions emphasize the role of learning and adaptation to the environment both in shaping and maintaining normal life functions and in the emergence of maladaptive symptomatology.

Some simple procedures are as follows:

- Teaching people to respond in a non-aggressive manner to any annoying situation, by learning to belittle the situation or laugh at it.
- To avoid overreacting to a frustrating situation, learning to be calm and composed, even if the situation is one that is irritating or troublesome.
- To understand other people's feelings and reactions more accurately, think about their emotions or responses in a given situation.

Such training can be given to children, young adults, colleagues, friends, students, sports teams and family members. There is bound to be a sharp reduction in aggression and an increase in cooperation. Other specific skills could include the following:

- Recognizing other's feelings
- Self-control strategies
- Dealing with one's anger in a non-aggressive way
- Staying out of fights, consciously
- Dealing with embarrassment
- Responding to teasing, in a jovial way
- Dealing with failures

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- Incompatible response training (humour, empathy in response to aggression)
- Playing with pets
- Helping behaviour

All these could result in a sharp reduction in aggression.

Culture and aggression

There are some cultures which are inherently aggressive in their orientation, while others are more passive. The aggressive cultures are also very supportive of aggressive behaviours. Their socialization patterns also show that child rearing practices favour aggression. These cultures also view aggression as positive. Also, cultures differ in terms of how their population deals with frustrations, for example, in Sri Lanka, quiet self-control is highly valued as a response to frustration. So, even in the face of provocations, dignified restraint is visible. According to a study, Anglo-Saxon cultures permit more aggression, when annoyed, while the Hispanic cultures display easy-going tendencies when anger-provoking situations present themselves.

In Japan, aggression is to be largely expressed within the family; while in Israel, expression of aggression outside the family, is seen as appropriate. Such beliefs about aggression and their expressions also encourage in certain cultures and discourage or deter in others.

Check Your Progress

8. What ae the benefits of catharsis?
9. List the techniques which reduces aggression.

6.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Cognitive approaches like reconditioning involve changing the way people think. Such approaches may entail thought suppression, retraining, creation of internal conflict, or social discomfort.
2. Illusory correlation is an erroneous belief about a connection between events, characteristics or categories that are not related at all.
3. The components of prejudice are cognitive, affective and behavioural.
4. The cognitive neoassociationist view theory proposes that exposure to negative events (those one wishes to avoid) causes unpleasant feelings. In turn these feelings activate a fight and flight response.
5. Aggression as a social behaviour has its roots in evolution because those behaviours that help in passing on the genes to the next generation

would become more dominant in the species. This means that males, who are more aggressive, would be the winners in mate selection.

6. Emotional or impulsive aggression is the type of aggression that at occurs with only a small amount of forethought or intent and that is determined primarily by impulsive emotions.
7. Non-verbal aggression is the type of aggression that does not involve physical harm.
8. The following are the benefits of catharsis:
   (a) Facilitate reduction of emotional tension.
   (b) Since the anger is expressed in a safe environment, the likelihood of more dangerous forms of aggression gets mitigated.
9. The techniques which help to reduce aggression are as follows:
   (a) Use of non-compatible response strategy
   (b) Training in social skills
   (c) Exposure to non-aggressive models

6.7 SUMMARY

- Prejudice involves a negative attitude towards the members of some social group, merely because of their membership in that group; for example, old people, mentally challenged people and widows.
- Discrimination is the unfair treatment of members of a given groups, because of their membership.
- Prejudice is a negative attitude while discrimination is prejudice in action. When there is a possibility of punishment, then the prejudice does not always lead to discrimination.
- Prejudice being a special type of attitude (generally negative) it operates as a schema.
- The cognitive component includes the beliefs and expectations about members of a given group, as well as the way in which information is processed.
- The affective component refers to the negative feelings experienced by prejudiced persons when they are in the presence of members of the despised group.
- The behavioural component involves the tendencies to act in negative ways against the members of this group.
- As prejudice and discrimination are frowned upon in modern, civilized life, it has driven both these inclinations underground.

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- Prejudice is seen to exist in all societies since time immemorial. It is an ever-present danger and a threat to any society as it is anti-development.
- The economic and motivational approaches give some explanations about the origins and unequal evaluations of the in-group and out-group as the basis for the development of prejudice and discrimination.
- The downside of the use of stereotypes involves occasional inaccuracies and errors. It can lead to unfair and biased judgements as all people may not fit into a stereotype.
- Stereotypes also determine that we remember and recall information that is consistent.
- When two distinct stimuli or events co-occur; they are perceived as correlated.
- We behave towards certain group members in such a way that we almost elicit the types of behaviours that we expect from them.
- Prejudicial evaluations continue due to out-group homogeneity in perceptions. Biased information processing occurs, whereby selective attention, retention and recall of stereotypic information occur.
- Prejudice also enhances the self is terms of a member, because they see their group as superior to the other group.
- The sociobiologists, D Barash (1977) D M Buss (1991) believe that aggression as a social behaviour has its roots in evolution. This theory suggests that those behaviours that help in passing on the genes to the next generation would become more dominant in the species.
- There is no unanimity on the validity of these perspectives. The innate theorists observe the prevalence of aggression across the world in support of their formulations.
- Pyschologist, Albert Bandura (1973) gave the social-learning view of aggression. This approach considers aggressive behaviour is learned, like any other form of social behaviour; aggression is largely the result of learning.
- Psychologist, Buss (1961) studied aggression in the laboratory using an ingenious device called aggression machine.
- Direct provocation appears to be a reasonable explanation of aggression, especially when frustration that seems illegitimate or unwarranted (someone's whims, for example, boss denying leave unfairly) produces stronger aggression, than frustration as compared to expected frustration, that is seen as legitimate.
- Aggressive cues could elicit aggression. The cues can lead to actual aggression when a person is angered or troubled or otherwise ready to fight or attack.

- Shame is a negative evaluation of the self when a flaw in an individual lead to a consequence and it is available for public scrutiny.
- There are various techniques to prevent aggression. Since aggression results from the interplay of several factors like learning, external events, cognition, and individual differences; it raises the hope of being able to manage or control aggression.
- Catharsis means allowing people an opportunity to participate in activities wherein they can give expression to their anger and hostility.
- Modern behavioural and cognitive-behavioural interventions emphasize the role of learning and adaptation to the environment both in shaping and maintaining normal life functions and in the emergence of maladaptive symptomatology.

6.8 KEY WORDS

- **Affective Component:** It refers to the negative feelings experienced by prejudiced persons when they are in the presence of members of the despised group.
- **Catharsis:** It refers to a process which allow people an opportunity to participate in activities wherein they can give expression to their anger and hostility.
- **Cognitive Aggression:** It refers to a type of aggression which is intentional.
- **Physical Aggression:** It refers to a type of aggression that involves harming others physically, for instance hitting, kicking, stabbing, or shooting them.

6.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the nature of prejudice and discrimination.
2. What are the advantages of stereotypes?
3. Write a short note on prejudice based on gender.
4. What are the techniques which can reduce prejudice?
5. State the premise of drive theory of aggression.
6. Why is it said that frustration does not always result in aggression?

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Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the most common form of discrimination.
2. Explain the perspectives related to the process of prejudice.
3. Analyse the theories related to the process of aggression.
4. 'Prejudicial evaluations continue due to out-group homogeneity in perceptions'. Elucidate the statement.
5. Explain the theories of aggression.
6. Interpret the determinants of aggression.

6.10 FURTHER READINGS

Lindgren, H C. 1973. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited.

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Feldman R S. 1985. *Social Psychology: Theories, Research and Application*. New Delhi: Tata Mcgraw Hill.

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BLOCK - III

BEHAVIOURS AND INFLUENCE

NOTES

UNIT 7 PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Structure

7.0 Introduction
7.1 Objectives
7.2 Motives for Prosocial Behaviour
  7.2.1 Bystander Behaviour: Responding to an Emergency
  7.2.2 Five Necessary Cognitive Steps For Help
  7.2.3 Internal and External Factors that Influence Altruistic Behaviour and Role Models
7.3 Explanations of Prosocial Behaviour
  7.3.1 Empathy–Altruism Theory: Unselfish Helping
  7.3.2 Empathic Joy and Genetic Selfishness
7.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
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7.0 INTRODUCTION

Prosocial behaviour is defined as a behaviour that aims to benefit others such as by sharing, helping, donation or volunteering for social causes. The actions for prosocial behaviour may be motivated by a lot of factors such as empathy, being concerned about the welfare of others, egoistical concerns and so on.

The most pure form of prosocial behaviour is altruism. According to a renowned author, Santrock, 'the circumstances most likely to evoke altruism are empathy for an individual in need or a close relationship between the benefactor and the recipient'. Prosocial behaviour develops positive traits in an individual which benefits the society.

In this unit, the concept of prosocial behaviour, the steps required for cognitive help and the factors which affect altruistic behaviour have been analysed. The theories of prosocial behaviour have also been discussed in the unit.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of prosocial behaviour

- Analyse the factors which influence altruistic behaviour
- Interpret the importance of role models in forming helping behaviour
- Explain the theories of prosocial behaviour

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7.2 MOTIVES FOR PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Prosocial behaviour means that our actions benefit others, even though the person helping out has no obvious gains from the activity; for example, helping a stranded driver change tyres. An altruistic behaviour is described as an unselfish behaviour for the welfare of others; for example, saving a drowning person. However, at times, both these behaviour could involve some risk for the people engaging in them. Let us examine the factors that facilitate or impede helping behaviour. Also, let us seek to understand the motivations that lead people to undertake altruistic behaviour.

7.2.1 Bystander Behaviour: Responding to an Emergency

There are good Samaritans who provide help and others who show apathy and ignore the situation, even when rendering help is warranted. Psychologist, D A Lang (1987) simulated an emergency situation in a hotel lobby where six people were sitting. He gave an example that a lady in a nearby seat is overheard saying that she is feeling dizzy. She becomes dizzier as the conversation proceeds. He asked his subjects what they would do under these conditions. Their responses fell into two categories—helpful and unhelpful. Four of them said that they would help the old lady and two said that they would not (refer Figure 7.1).

Analysis of responses to specific emergency situations suggests that the extent to which bystanders help or fail to help can be categorized as falling at six levels. In the example here, subjects were asked to imagine themselves overhearing a woman saying that she is feeling ill, dizzy, and anxious. The subjects were asked what, if anything, they would do in this situation. Their responses ranged from a direct intervention with a plan about what to do on one extreme to a refusal to help based on attributions about the woman and a rationalization for not doing anything.

Six levels of helpfulness–unhelpfulness	
Helpful Responses	
1. Direct Intervention with a Plan for Helping	"I'll give her my seat, and offer to get her a glass of water or wait with her."
2. General Help	"I'll go over and ask if she's okay."
3. Indirect Help or Reporting the Incident	"I'll tell someone at the hotel desk that the woman on the phone needs assistance."
4. Conditional Help	"If she walks around where I'm sitting and if she looks really sick and wants my help, then I guess I'll help her."
Unhelpful Responses	
5. No Help or Interaction	"I think I'll read this magazine."
6. Refusal to Help Along with an Attribution or Rationalization	"I'm not going to help her. The information probably isn't important anyway."

Source: Based on data in Lang, 1987.

Fig. 7.1 *D.A. Lang's Analysis*

Source: *Based on data in Lang, 1987.*

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7.2.2 Five Necessary Cognitive Steps For Help

A five-step process was described by psychologists, Latane and Darby, which was given by Byrne and Kelley (1981). At each step, one decision leads to help while the other results in no-help. Attending to the emergency involves the following five steps:

- Step 1: Notice that there is an emergency
- Step 2: Interpret the situation correctly
- Step 3: Avoid feelings of embarrassment, if the judgement is incorrect
- Step 4: Riding on what others are doing or not doing—social comparison
- Step 5: Knowing what to do and having the skills for helping

All these decision, if positive, would result in helping behaviour. Fig. 7.2 illustrates the five decisions that lead to prosocial behaviour or failure of help.

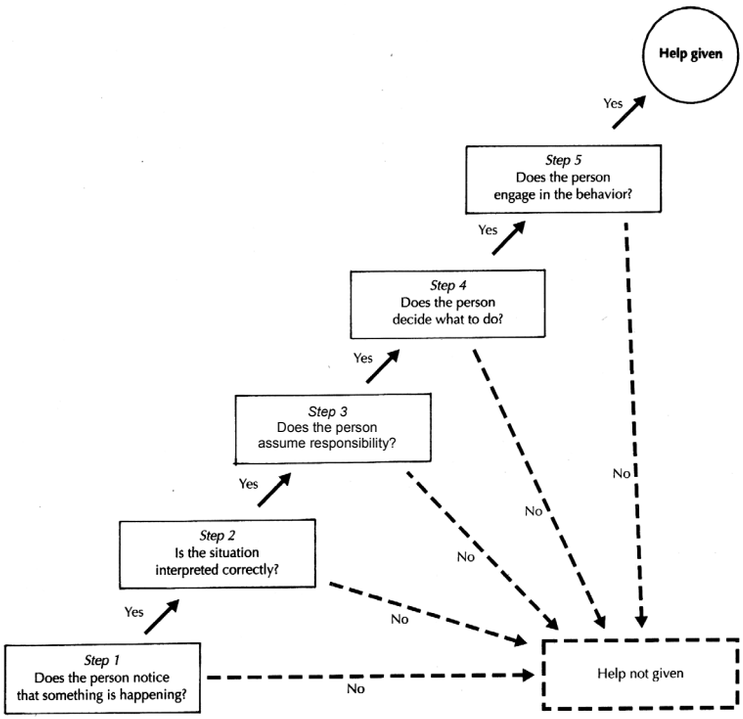

Fig. 7.2 *Five Decisions that Lead to Prosocial Behaviour or Failure of Help*

Source: *Adapted from Byrne and Kelley, 1981.*

7.2.3 Internal and External Factors that Influence Altruistic Behaviour and Role Models

In this section we will discuss the internal and external factors which influence altruistic behaviours and the concept of role models.

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Study of helpers and non-helpers

The following factors influence altruistic behaviour:

- Empathy
- Belief in a just world
- Social responsibility
- Internal locus of control
- Lower levels of ego-centrism (self-absorbed, concern for others)

These five dimensions set the potential helpers apart from the non-helpers.

Role models

We all show helping behaviour, make contributions to charity when we see others doing the same, even the sight of paper money and coins in the box encourage donations. The presence of bystanders who are offering help also fosters helping behaviour in others. This is the modelling effect; blood donation is another example of it. TV shows can stimulate altruistic behaviour as well, for example, when we see a TV show that shows kindness to animals or older persons, even we get impacted. TV can exert positive prosocial responses.

Positive and negative emotions affecting altruistic behaviour

Effect of positive and negative emotions or moods and their effect on behaviour have been well established in studies. However, the research on moods and prosocial behaviour is complicated. People in a happy mood are not very willing to engage in prosocial behaviour in an emergency situation (a road accident) because they do not wish to spoil their present happy mood with unpleasant tasks (in this case, taking a wounded person to hospital and so on.). However, generally those in a good mood are willing to offer help more readily than those in a bad mood. This is the effect of the positive emotion they are experiencing. Positive emotions can help or hinder helping other people (refer Figure 7.3).

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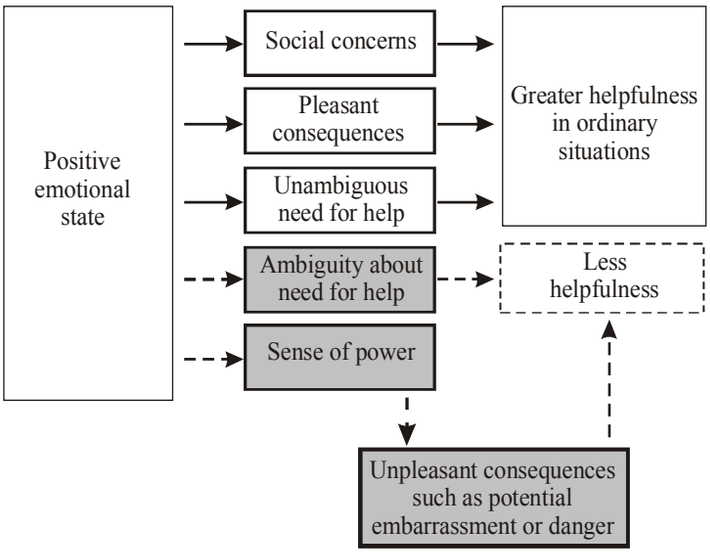

Fig. 7.3 *Positive Emotions can Help or Hinder Prosocial Behaviour*

Negative emotions have a similar impact on helping behaviour. Sometimes, negative emotions increase helping behaviour because it provides relief from the poor emotional state we are in. Also, being good to others makes people feel good about themselves. People in mourning are often told to go out and help children with their school work or organize picnics for senior citizens and so on. However, if we are very angry or depressed then helping others is not going to help us feel better. Helping behaviour as a way of relieving negative emotions will occur in the following circumstances:

- When the behaviour required is easy and effective.
- When helping would lead to more positive feelings.
- When negative feelings are not very intense.
- When the focus is less on oneself and more outward.

When attention is directed to others and their misfortune, empathy is aroused, this could motivate prosocial behaviour; for example, a strong motivation to donate money or clothes to natural calamity victims.

Short-terms responses (accidents, flood-relief and so on.) are one set of the conditions for prosocial activities. Long-term ones have a different set of dynamics at work; for example, AIDS volunteer work. Sociologists, Snyder and Omoto (1992) have listed five motivating factors that contribute to such helping behaviour. They are discussed in Figure 7.4.

NOTES

Motivation for Volunteering to Help in the AIDS Epidemic	
1. Personal Values	"Because of my humanitarian obligation to help others"
2. Desire to Increase Understanding	"Because I want to learn how people cope with AIDS"
3. Community Concern	"Because of my concern and worry about the gay community"
4. Personal Development	"I want to challenge myself and test my skills"
5. Enhancement of Self-Esteem	"I want to feel better about myself"

Fig. 7.4 *Snyder and Omoto Five Factors that Contribute to Motivating Behaviours*

Source: *Based on data in Snyder and Omoto, 1992*

The main difference between those who quit after starting volunteer work and those who continued is that people who continue to work were curiously motivated by the need to enhance their self-esteem. Thus, when it comes to long-term commitment, a selfish reason is required and it is this reason that makes us deal with difficult people. Another differential was that quitters felt the cost and effort involved in long-term helping behaviour to be very high. They also reported a stigma effect created by working with groups like AIDS victims, prostitutes from others in the society. This is termed country stigma.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the factors which influence altruistic behaviour?
2. State the impact of negative emotions on helping behaviour.

7.3 EXPLANATIONS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The helper sees prosocial behaviour in positive terms. It is the right thing to help an accident victim. The observer views it critically and explains the helping behaviour as an attempt by the helper to create a good impression of him or her.

7.3.1 Empathy–Altruism Theory: Unselfish Helping

Empathy implies identifying and relating to the feelings of the other person. For example, distress is understood with empathy by most people. Batson (1981) proposed the empathy-altruism hypothesis to explain prosocial behaviour. Empathy is seen as the main motivator of altruistic behaviour. Empathy includes sympathy and compassion towards the victim. When empathy is around, people tend to help. In the absence of empathy, people escape from helping (refer Figure 7.5).

According to the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al., 1981, 1983; Toi & Batson, 1982), some prosocial acts are motivated purely by concern about the welfare of the victim,. Without feelings of empathy, the bystander escapes from the scene if this can be done easily.

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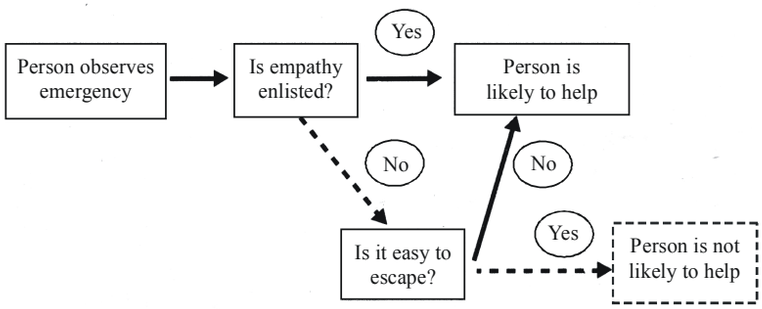

Fig. 7.5 *Empathy–Altruism Theory to Motivate Prosocial Behaviour*

A high level of empathy results in prosocial behaviour and a low level of empathy results in escape behaviour.

Egoistic theory

Helping others reduces uncomfortable feelings and negative moods find relief in helping behaviour. This implies that it is not empathy, but selfishness that leads to prosocial behaviour as it provides relief from negative emotional states (refer Figure 7.6).

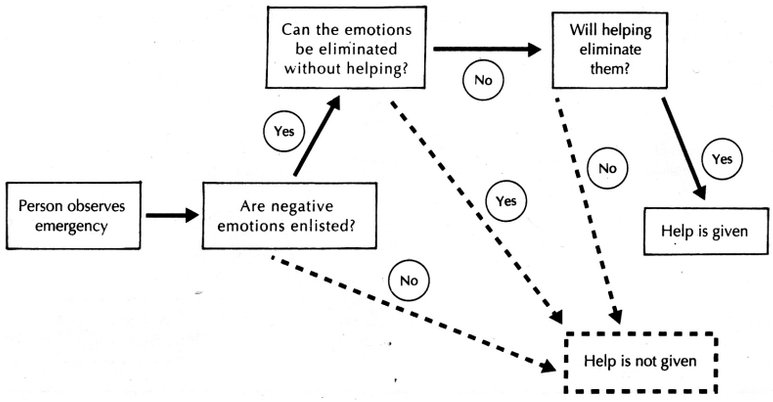

Fig. 7.6 *Cialdini Model—Negative State Relief as the Motive of Prosocial Behaviour*

The researchers state that along with negative feelings, sadness is also aroused. It is proposed that with increase in sadness, helping was also found to increase.

7.3.2 Empathic Joy and Genetic Selfishness

Empathic joy is seen as an alternative to egoistic theory. Prosocial behaviour is motivated by the joy of helping someone and meeting some other persons'

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needs. Here, help comes only if the reward of joy is possible for the help giver. When help is given, positive emotions are aroused. This is known as a helper's high. This increases the sense of self-worth. Thus, prosocial activity makes one feel good and hence, experience of joy is crucial for prosocial behaviour. For example, teachers wish to know how their students did in a course, as the students were coached by them (refer Figure 7.7).

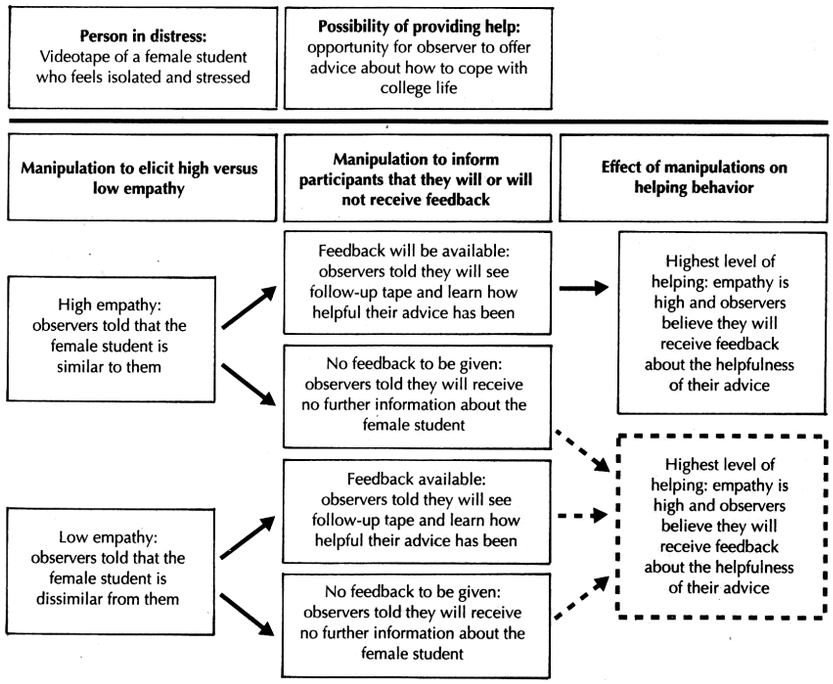

Fig. 7.7 *Comparison of Empathic Altruism and Empathic Joy Explanations of Prosocial Behaviour*

Genetic selfishness—helping similar others

Genetic selfishness is an evolutionary psychologists' explanation of helping. It is proposed that helping is genetically determined. Behaviour that increases reproductiveness, and fitness is favoured and that which is irrelevant is discarded. The greater the genetic similarity between two individuals, the more likely that one will provide help to the other. This is called the selfish-gene syndrome. This is motivated by the desire to pass on similar genes to future generations and ensure their survival. Each person wants to line longer and also enhance the reproductive ability of those who are similar.

This explains the phenomenon of scams involving relatives, robotism in selections, favouritism in granting benefits, privileges and so on to persons of our own kind. Matrimonial preferences can also be accounted for by the notion of a selfish-gene. Racial, ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious and other biases towards people of the same kind are easier to understand, if genetic factors are seen as the consideration for engaging in prosocial behaviour.

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It is perhaps a farfetched explanation, but it is reasonable to assume that people, who have been raised in similar environments, develop certain traits. These traits indicate formability and therefore comfort. So being with such people and wanting to help them/support them and so on seem likely, as compared to people with other traits, who are unfamiliar. Help giving and help seeking behaviour is largely situationally determined. At times, cultural values also influence help giving and seeking.

Check Your Progress

3. What do you understand by the term 'helper's high'?
4. State the most basic reason for selfish-gene syndrome.

7.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The factors which influence altruistic behaviour are as follows:
   (a) Empathy
   (b) Belief in a just world
   (c) Social responsibility
   (d) Internal locus of control
   (e) Lower levels of ego-centrism (self-absorbed, concern for others)
2. Negative emotions have a similar impact on helping behaviour. Sometimes, negative emotions increase helping behaviour because it provides relief from the poor emotional state we are in.
3. Prosocial behaviour is motivated by the joy of helping someone and meeting some other persons' needs. Here, help comes only if the reward of joy is possible for the help giver. When help is given, positive emotions are aroused, this is known as a helper's high.
4. The most common reason behind selfish-gene syndrome is the desire to pass on similar genes to future generations and ensure their survival. Each person wants to line longer and also enhance the reproductive ability of those who are similar.

7.5 SUMMARY

- Prosocial behaviour means that our actions benefit others, even though the person helping out has no obvious gains from the activity.
- An altruistic behaviour is described as an unselfish behaviour for the welfare of others.

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- We all show helping behaviour, make contributions to charity when we see others doing the same. The presence of bystanders who are offering help also fosters helping behaviour in others. This is the modelling effect.
- Effect of positive and negative emotions or moods and their effect on behaviour have been well established in studies.
- People in a happy mood are not very willing to engage in prosocial behaviour in an emergency situation (a road accident) because they do not wish to spoil their present happy mood with unpleasant tasks (in this case, taking a wounded person to hospital and so on).
- Negative emotions have a similar impact on helping behaviour. Sometimes, negative emotions increase helping behaviour because it provides relief from the poor emotional state we are in.
- When attention is directed to others and their misfortune, empathy is aroused, this could motivate prosocial behaviour; for example, a strong motivation to donate money or clothes to natural calamity victims.
- Short-terms responses (accidents, flood-relief and so on.) are one set of the conditions for prosocial activities.
- Long-term ones have a different set of dynamics at work; for example, AIDS volunteer work.
- The main difference between those who quit after starting volunteer work and those who continued is that people who continue to work were curiously motivated by the need to enhance their self-esteem.
- The helper sees prosocial behaviour in positive terms. It is the right thing to help an accident victim.
- The observer views it critically and explains the helping behaviour as an attempt by the helper to create a good impression of him or her.
- Empathy implies identifying and relating to the feelings of the other person. For example, distress is understood with empathy by most people.
- Empathy includes sympathy and compassion towards the victim. When empathy is around, people tend to help. In the absence of empathy, people escape from helping.
- Helping others reduces uncomfortable feelings and negative moods find relief in helping behaviour.
- Prosocial behaviour is motivated by the joy of helping someone and meeting some other persons' needs.
- Prosocial activity makes one feel good and hence, experience of joy is crucial for prosocial behaviour.

- Genetic selfishness is an evolutionary psychologists' explanation of helping. It is proposed that helping is genetically determined.
- The greater the genetic similarity between two individuals, the more likely that one will provide help to the other. This is called the selfish-gene syndrome.
- Racial, ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious and other biases towards people of the same kind are easier to understand, if genetic factors are seen as the consideration for engaging in prosocial behaviour.

7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Altruistic Behaviour:** It refers to an unselfish behaviour for the welfare of others; for example, saving a drowning person.
- **Empathy:** It refers to a state of emotion in which a person identifies and relates to the feelings of the other person.
- **Prosocial Behavior:** It refers to a behaviour in which our actions benefit others, even though the person helping out has no obvious gains from the activity.
- **Selfish-Gender Syndrome:** It refers to a syndrome in which the greater the genetic similarity is between two individuals, the more likely they will provide help to the other.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on prosocial behaviour.
2. What are the five steps of cognitive help?
3. How does helping behaviour relieves negative emotions?
4. What do you understand by the term country stigma?
5. State the premises of egoistic theory.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the levels of helpfulness and unhelpfulness.
2. Explain the importance of role models in helping behaviour.
3. What are the positive and negative effects of altruistic behaviour? Analyse in detail.

4. Interpret the short-term and long-term responses for prosocial activities.
5. Discuss the empathy-altruism theory.

NOTES

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

Lindgren, H C. 1973. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited.

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NOTES

UNIT 8 UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING THE SOCIAL WORLD

Structure

8.0 Introduction
8.1 Objectives
8.2 Social Cognition
  8.2.1 Basic Aspects of Social Thoughts
  8.2.2 Affect and Cognition
  8.2.3 The Impact of Emotions on Different Aspects of Our Social Thoughts
  8.2.4 Social Perception
8.3 Attitude
8.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
8.5 Summary
8.6 Key Words
8.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
8.8 Further Readings

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Social cognition is defined as sub-part of psychology which focuses on how people process, store and apply information about other people. It helps an individual to form an opinion about others. Its main aim is to focus on the role of cognitive processes which play an important part during our social interactions.

Attitude in psychology can be defined as a psychological construct in which an emotional and mental entity characterizes an individual. It is an acquired state which is complex and is gained through experiences. It is a responsive expression based on our thoughts towards a thing, place or person and it shapes our opinions based on that expression.

In this unit, the concept of social cognition, the basic aspects of social thoughts and its theories have been discussed. The role of attitude in shaping social thoughts, the way in which one can change the attitude towards others have also been analysed. The unit will also discuss the importance of attitude-behaviour link.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of social cognition

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- Analyse the basic aspects of social thoughts
- Interpret the impact of emotions on our social thoughts
- Explain the role of attitude in forming our social thoughts
- Discuss the principles of attitude-behaviour link

8.2 SOCIAL COGNITION

All our lives we are interested in knowing about people and the world around us. We use social information available to judge others and evaluate situations. There are feelings that develop as a result of these experiences. The use of such information to understand others and the social world that exists around us is social cognition.

People use mental shortcuts to quickly understand people and situations. Like all shortcuts, they have their benefits as well as limitations. Other forms of biases may also enter and influence our judgements. Emotions too play a role in our understanding. All these constitute the study of social cognition.

Mental Shortcuts in Social Cognition and Basic Aspects of Social Thoughts

Strategies are used to reduce effort and decrease the extent of information overload, yet there exists a fair degree of accuracy in the judgements. Heuristics is one such well researched and understood mental shortcuts. It is aimed at providing single decision-making rules and drawing easy and fast conclusions. Two mechanisms that are at work in everyday living are representativeness and availability.

(i) **Representativeness:** Let us take an example of a neighbour who has a house full of books, is orderly and neat, is reserved and wears conservative clothes. From this limited available information we want to guess her profession. Here, we determine the profession by using the heuristics of representativeness. We compare him or her to people we know who are similar in terms of these characteristics and then try to fit her into their category. For example, he or she could be a school librarian or a college professor. In making such a judgement, we are using the simple rule that the more typically he or she resembles a member of a given group; the more likely it is that she belongs to that group.

The accuracy of such a judgement is not always reliable, because there are people who display traits, but do not belong to the group, that is typical. Relying completely on the representativeness heuristics has the danger of people overlooking other types of information. The error arising from this tendency is known as base-rate fallacy. Here, we tend

to ignore useful base-rate information; this refers to the frequency with which some events or characteristics occur in the general population.

(ii) Availability: Availability means what comes to mind first. Here, judgements are made on the basis of easy-to-remember rule. The easier ones are recalled more readily and are used for knowing the social world. Sociologists, Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1973) studied this heuristics process and concluded that the availability heuristics does operate through our subjective feelings that come to mind when dealing with social information. The ease of recall is the basis of judging. The availability shortcut for understanding people and things around us has other implications that are discussed in the following sections**.**

- ***False-consensus effect:*** We all have certain details that readily come to our mind; we have a tendency to believe that others also must be thinking the same. For example, if we believe that abortion is wrong as it involves terminating a life; the moral factor would come readily to mind when the issue of abortion is raised. The availability heuristics believes that others also have similar views. This tendency is known as the false-consensus effect. Here, more people than perhaps exist are seen as agreeing with one's point of view.

This false consensus arises because we wish to believe that others are also in agreement and it is easier to notice and remember those people who have a similar position as our own. This is facilitated by the availability shortcut. Further, we also associate with those people who share our views. Thus, we are more exposed to people who think like us, as we tend to befriend those people who are somewhat like us. This also results in a higher degree of availability for agreement and further contributes to the false consensus effect.

The effect is prevalent most of the time, but it does fail when some people are motivated to perceive themselves as unique and therefore, wish to stand out, disregarding the consensus factor.

- ***Priming:*** Often, when we read about description of diseases, we start to identify some of the symptoms in us as well. Reading a horror story at night when alone could make us believe and see certain frightening things around us. These are instances of the effect of priming. Certain stimuli heighten the availability of certain information that is readily brought to mind. Similarly, traits that are used for describing a person are used as primes for generating impressions about them, even if they are fictitious characters. Priming is a social fact and is based on the availability heuristics.

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8.2.1 Basic Aspects of Social Thoughts

Our social thinking is far from accurate. There are tilts, tendencies and potential errors, inherent in it.

- ***Tilts, tendencies and potential errors***

In trying to understand the people and situations around us, we tend to pay greater attention to the unexpected or inconsistent information that is available. Since, we pay more attention to unusual information; the chances are that such information would enter long-term memory and thereafter influence our social judgements later (S T Fiske and S L Neuberg, 1990). Studies by J L Hilton, J G Klein and W Von Hippel (1991) showed that subjects recall inconsistent information more accurately than consistent information. However, there are occasion when inconsistent information is perceived and recalled more readily; but does not always influence judgements. For example, Ravana in Hindu mythology is personified as evil, but is also portrayed as a scholar and a caring brother. The latter information fails to alter the judgement of Ravana as a demon.

- ***Noticing the negative***

This is viewed as an automatic vigilance phenomenon. This has survival orientation. By paying attention to the negative events around us, we become alerted to the potential dangers surrounding us. Since, the attention is focused on the negative, overlooking their positive information is a real possibility. This is indeed unfortunate. This tendency comes into play in our social evaluations also; for example, when a person who is generally appreciative and positive utters one critical remark, his criticism is disproportionately remembered, while the other several positives are largely forgotten.

Since we are extra-sensitive to negative inputs, any such information does influence social judgements. This compels us to make good first impressions, as a way of ensuring a favourable evaluation.

- ***Motivated skepticism***

This is the tendency to be skeptical about information that is inconsistent with our preferences or views. Since we have to decide; we tend to believe data that agrees with our positions and quietly reject those that are in disagreement. For example, belief in astrological predictions, teacher evaluations, and populist ideologies and so on are all living examples of this phenomenon at work.

Sociologists, P H Ditto and D F Lopez (1992) carried out a study to show that when information that is required to conclude about a hitherto disliked person is inconclusive, the inconsistent evidence is ignored and a negative evaluation is made. Cognitive filters work to shut out inconsistent information.

Several of our social judgements based on caste, region, language, religion and other demagogic and ethnic factors clearly show the operation of this bias. So, inconsistent information is discarded and the cognition made consistent, by enabling one to fit it with one's preferences and orientations. Thus, it can be concluded that heuristics, automatic vigilance and motivated skepticism are all attempts of social cognition with the minimum cognitive effort, to gain understanding of the social world, around us.

8.2.2 Affect and Cognition

It is interesting to study how thoughts shape feeling and how feelings shape thinking. If we had a bad day at work, we tend to be irritated and annoyed with even small things at home like a child refusing to eat food and so on. This is because we feel angry all over again at the thought of what happened earlier. These thoughts influence our current emotional states.

What we have experienced and what others have said or done seem to trigger emotional reactions that are fairly intense in nature. The reverse also holds true.

8.2.3 The Impact of Emotions On Different Aspects Of Our Social Thoughts

The nature of emotions

Feelings are a part of living. There are three theories of emotions known to psychology. These three theories are discussed as follows:

(i) Cannon-Bard Theory: In Cannon-Bard Theory, the view is that when emotions are aroused, we experience both the physiological arousals that accompany it as well the subjective experiences associated with the emotion. These emotions we label as joy, anger, sorrow and so on. This is the common-sense as well as concurrent notion of emotions.

(ii) James-Lange Theory: The James-Lange Theory proposes that our subjective emotional experiences are the outcome of our almost automatic physiological reactions to various happenings. For example, we experience anger or fear because our heart races, our head pounds, we break into a sweat and the face colour changes to red. Another example could be the feeling of sadness, when a loved one departs, we start crying and then we notice our experience that we are feeling sad. This is the sequence, according to this theory.

(iii) Schachter's Two-Factor Theory: In Schachter's Two-Factor, when there is a physiological arousal we search for the causes of these feelings. This leads us to identify the label that we put on our emotional experiences. So, if we are excited by the presence of a person we are

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interested in, we label it as attraction or love. Then there is the label 'fear' attached to something that is dreadful, and so on.

So, we perceive an emotion and then look for external cues to understand the feelings. Here, both cognitive and situational factors play a role in our subjective emotional experiences.

There is the facial-feedback hypothesis that suggests we can produce or suppress our experiences of emotion. When we smile, we feel happy; if we are grouchy, we feel sad and so on even while imagining positive or negative events. Controlling the facial muscles can enhance or curb the accompanying emotions. Actors frequently change their emotions by controlling their facial muscles. This is why people in mourning are told to go out, take a holiday and be with friends as a change of scene can cause different physical and physiological activities and these in turn can alter the feelings.

Sociologist, Robert Boles aw Zajonc and his colleagues (1989) found evidence to show that the face and brain are linked. Facial expressions do change the blood supply to the brain and thereby, alter the temperature and thereafter the neurochemical events in the brain. This also explains the universality of facial expressions and emotions.

Affect and cognition

When we are happy, things around us seem good; while in a state of unhappiness, everything seems difficult and bad. When the stimuli are vague, then the emotional states have a clear bearing on our evaluations. Sociologist, R A Baron (1987) A M Isen (1987) found that the existing mood makes it easier to remember information that is consistent with it, rather than information that is inconsistent with it.

Positive and negative events also influence the way any information is organized in our memory. Positive events include a wider range of information within the memory categories and also provide unusual associations to words and objects as compared to negative events. For instance, when we get our results of the board examination, we remember what we were doing, what clothes we wore, whose company we were in and so on. People in a positive mood are also seen to be more creative. All these indicate that affective states do influence social cognition.

Several of the heuristics can be applied here. The use of minimal cognitive effort, easy availability and motivated skepticism all can explain the relations between emotions and cognitions. Sociologist, Joseph P Forgas (1991) carried out a study wherein the participants' mood was altered by getting them to watch a comedy or tragedy. Then they had to choose a suitable partner, from the existing pool. It was found that the mood exerted a strong

effect on the outcomes. Thus, the processing is motivated by the emotional states. These determine our decisions and in turn our relationship with others.

Cognitions influencing affect

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The theory of sociologists, Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer (1962) suggests that our bodily reactions are often unclear to us. So, we look for external cues to identify our emotional states and recognize them, appropriately. Therefore, our emotions are clearly determined by the interpretations or cognitive labels we attach to them.

Cognitions affect emotions through the activation of schemas or frameworks. It helps in identifying a person as belonging to a particular social group. This schema suggests certain traits or qualities associated with the group. This further indicates our feelings towards people belonging to that group. Thus, our social thoughts affect our emotions towards that person. This is how religions, national, ethnic, regional and other stereotypes that get activated, influence our feelings.

Our thoughts can also influence our reactions to an emotion-provoking event and how we interpret the event. For example, if a car is grazed by the driver in the side lane, our reaction would depend on the intention that we see behind the episode. If it is interpreted as being deliberate, then anger could be provoked; if it is interpreted to be one of sheer accident, then the feelings aroused would be different.

Our interpretations of others' actions play a key role in our emotional reactions to them. Cognitions also influence affect of the expectancies in terms of reactions. For example, conservative people are expected to dislike new types of food and clothing. Hence, people show displeasure even before they have tasted the food or tried out the new style of clothes. Conversely, when we go out to a party or a game with the expectation of having a lot of fun; almost every aspect of the situation seems funny and enjoyable, regardless of the actual event. Our reactions are strongly influenced by our expectancies about how we should react.

8.2.4 Social Perception

People are an enigma. Often, we find it difficult to understand, what we say and do and do not do. Yet, since other persons are significant in our lives, it is important that we develop some understanding about others' motivations, thoughts and intentions. Upon this understanding, we can base our interactions with others. The process of seeking such information is social perception.

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Check Your Progress

1. How does cognition affect emotions?
2. Why is the accuracy of a judgement not always reliable?
3. State the premise of James-Lange Theory.

8.3 ATTITUDE

Different people may have different views about their jobs. Some people may find their jobs highly interesting, while others may complain about boredom. Views held are also complex. Some like some things about their jobs (for example, 'My boss is great') and dislike others (for example, 'The pay is terrible'). Regardless of how one might feel, the attitude expressed may be recognized as consisting of three major components: an evaluative component, a cognitive component, and a behavioural component (McGuire 1985). Since these represent the basic building blocks of our definition of attitudes, we shall take a close look at them.

So far, it has been suggested that attitudes have a great deal to do with how we feel about something. The evaluative component of an attitude refers to our feelings of like or dislike towards a particular person, item or event (what might be called an attitude object, the focus of our attitude). One may, for example, feel positively or negatively towards your boss, the sculpture in the lobby or the fact that your company just landed a large contract. However, attitudes involve more than feelings; they also involve knowledge, that is, what you feel about an attitude object. For example, one might believe that their co-workers gets paid much more than them or that their supervisor does not know too much about the job. These beliefs, whether completely accurate or false, comprise the cognitive component of the attitudes.

As we might imagine, the things we believe about something (for example, 'My boss is embezzling company funds') and the way we feel about it (for example, 'I can't stand working for him') may have some effect on the way we are predisposed to behave (for example, 'I think I am going to look for a new job'). In other words, attitudes also have a behavioural component—a predisposition to act in a certain way. It is important to note that such a predisposition may not actually be predictive of one's behaviour. For example, an individual may be interested in taking a new job; or might not actually take one if a better position is not available or if there are other aspects of a job; one may like it enough to compensate for the negative feelings. In other words, the intention to behave a certain way may or may not dictate how we will actually behave.

Combining these various components, we can define attitude as relatively stable clusters of feelings, beliefs, and behavioural dispositions (or intentions) towards some specific objects. By including the phrase 'relatively stable' in the definition, the reference is being made to something that is not fleeting and that, once formed, tends to persist. In fact, changing attitudes may require considerable effort. When we speak about work-related attitudes, we are talking about these lasting feelings, beliefs, and behavioural tendencies towards various aspects of the job itself, the setting in which the work is conducted and/or the people involved. Work-related attitudes are associated with many important aspects of organizational behaviour, including job performance, absence from work, and voluntary turnover. Such relationships are often very complex, varying across different situations and different people, and cannot be understood without a great deal of carefully conducted systematic research.

Changing Our Own Attitudes: The Process of Cognitive Dissonance

Suppose, as someone college graduation approaches, he or she receive two job offers. After much agonizing, they finally select one. If he or she is like most people, they will probably find that their attitude towards the two companies will change. Specifically, their attitude towards the job, they have accepted will become more positive ('It's a great place, I am fortunate to be working here') and the attitude towards the job, they did not take will become more negative ('It's really not such a good company, I am glad I decided against it'). The same process might occur after one select a car to purchase, a school to attend or any course of action that one take. What is ultimately being stressed is that in their most general forms, people's attitudes towards selected alternatives become positive and the attitude towards rejected alternative becomes more negative. Why does this occur? The answer lies in the process called *cognitive dissonance* (Festinger 1957).

In most cases, people dislike inconsistencies. When we say one thing and do another (for example, claim we like job A but take job B) or when we discover that one attitude we hold is inconsistent with another (for example, we cherish our health but also enjoy smoking), the unpleasant state known as cognitive dissonance arises. We feel uneasy about the inconsistencies, believe our various attitudes, and are motivated to change our attitude to resolve this dissonance. In the example, the fact that you selected one job may disorient with the fact that you once considered the advantages of the other. Therefore, to justify our decision and to avoid cognitive dissonance, simply change the way we feel, bringing our attitude in line with our feelings. Specifically, we adopt a more positive attitude towards the job we accepted and a less positive attitude towards the job we rejected. Derogating the characteristics of a position we did not take and touting the benefits of the position we took may be understood as attempts to avoid cognitive dissonance.

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To show how attempts to avoid cognitive dissonance may be involved in changing our own attitude, let's consider an example. Suppose one believes strongly in protecting the physical environment from pollution. At the same time, he or she also strongly believes in being a loyal employee, doing what their boss asks for the good of the company. No problems arise until one day; they are required to do something by their company that they believe pollutes the environment—packing shipments in non-biodegradable materials. Confronted with this situation, you experience cognitive dissonance: Their positive attitude towards protecting the environment is inconsistent with the fact that he or she have contributed to polluting it (which one did because he or she are such a loyal employee). As a result, their behaviour is dissonant with their attitude, prompting a person to change their attitude towards protecting the environment—perhaps by rationalizing that protecting the environment really isn't that important after all. By shifting their attitude in this fashion, their behaviour is no longer inconsistent with their attitude, thereby resolving the cognitive dissonance.

Strategies for Changing Attitudes: The Determinants of Persuasiveness

As discussed in the previous section, people sometimes change their own attitude so as to make it consistent with others. There are situations in which we purposely attempt to change others' attitudes. In particular, we may be interested in improving people's work-related attitudes, because their negative attitude may be associated with undesirable behaviour. (for example, high rate of absenteeism and turnover). Of course, we may also be interested in changing attitude for its own sake—that is, creating a more positive attitude towards the job just because of the positive feeling that results—helping people enjoy a higher quality of life at work.

Suppose a boss asks an employee to work late to complete a vital report in time for an important meeting tomorrow morning. Now imagine a TV commercial touting the health benefits of a new breakfast cereal. Although these two situations appear to be quite dissimilar, they show an important common element. Both are appeals to change our attitude—to be more willing to work late in the first case and to become interested in the cereal in the second case. Although one is not probably aware of it, much of the time it's likely that we are constantly bombarded by attempts to change our attitude—a process known as *persuasion*. In the persuasion process, a target person (the individual whose attitude is to be changed) is given a message (either written or spoken) in which the information presented is designed to change his or her attitude (see Figure 8.1). This process involves two basic elements—the communicator (the person doing the communicating) and the communication (the specific content of the message itself) (Petty and Cacioppo 1984).

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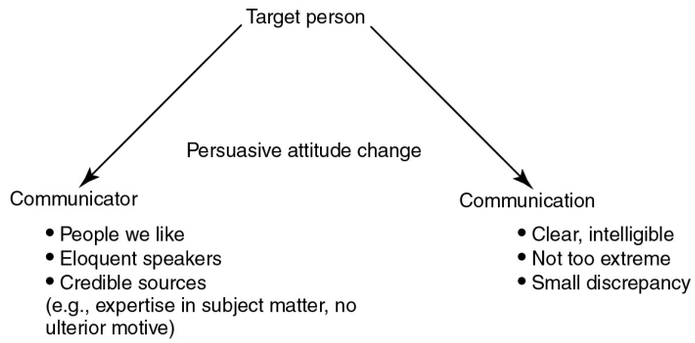

Fig. 8.1 *The Persuasive Process*

Communicators: what makes them persuasive?

Research has shown that several factors which enhance the persuasiveness of communicators. First, in general, we are highly persuaded by individuals we like. It is so because we tend to ignore those we dislike, such individuals are unlikely to be effective agents of attitude change. Second, people who are smooth, eloquent speakers tend to be highly effective at persuading others. By speaking rapidly and without hesitation, eloquent speakers project the image that they know what they are talking about (Miller et al. 1976). Fast-talkers are generally very convincing and, therefore, highly persuasive.

Probably, the single most important determinant of persuasiveness is a person's credibility, the extent to which an individual appears to be trustworthy or believable. The more credible an individual is believed to be, the more effective he or she will be in changing attitudes. What, then, makes someone appear to be credible? One key factor is expertise (Cote 1999). Generally speaking, the more someone appears to possess a high level of knowledge about a topic, the more persuasive that individual will be in persuading people on issues relevant to that topic. The persuasive power of expertise appears to be precisely what advertisers of pain medication rely on when they cite the opinions of experts—doctors, in this case, as the basis for their appeals to use their product. But advertisers know as well that credibility also depends on the communicator's apparent motives. In particular, someone's credibility is likely to be challenged if he or she is expected to derive some gain by changing our attitudes. For this reason, many commercials rely on 'hidden camera' scenes in which people who are unaware that their remarks are being recorded give product testimonials. The idea is that someone who does not stand to benefit from your behaviour would be unlikely to misrepresent themselves for the purpose of changing your attitude. Without any reason to discount what they say, individuals lacking ulterior motives may be highly credible and, therefore, highly effective in getting people to change their attitudes.

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Communication: what makes a message persuasive?

Persuasiveness depends not only on the characteristics of the communicator, but also on the message being communicated. Two important characteristics have been identified which makes the message more persuasive.

First, it is essential for the message to be clear and intelligible. Obviously, unless messages are understood accurately, they have little or no chance of changing attitudes. Still, people in business settings often fail to keep this in mind. Consider, for example, a supervisor of a chemical analysis research unit attempting to convince company officials that her division needs a large budget. If he or she makes the mistake of talking over the heads of his or her less-technologically-oriented colleagues, they will not stand much chance of persuading them to part with their funds.

A second determinant of the message is how different it is from the views already held by the target person; that is, the size of the attitude discrepancy. Sometimes, people are asked to make drastic changes in their attitude (for example, from being pro-life to pro-choice on the issue of abortion), whereas other times they are asked to change them only a little (for example, from being in favour of a ₹1 million budget for your department to accepting ₹950,000). It's easier to get people to change their attitude when the position you advocate is only slightly different from their own than when it is extremely different. This occurs, largely, because people tend to dismiss highly discrepant views as unreasonable and unworthy of their consideration, whereas slightly discrepant views are believed to be more reasonable and acceptable. On this basis, it would appear that attitudes may be more effectively changed by 'clipping away' at them a little bit at a time than by attempting to persuade someone to change his views more drastically all at once. Although we have been describing ways of changing the attitudes of people individually, it is possible to use the mass media to change the attitudes of large numbers of people towards companies, or even business in general.

Attitude Behavior Link

To what extent do attitudes predict or cause behaviour? Behavioural scientists used to contend that individual behaviours were consistent with their attitudes. However, they now accept the motion that a simple direct link between attitude and behaviour doesn't frequently exist. For example, if an individual has negative feelings, opinions, and behavioural dispositions towards his or her boss, he or she may still choose not to behave negatively towards them because (1) he or she cannot offend his senior, (2) the norms of courteous behaviour outweigh his or her desire to express his negative attitude, (3) he or she may decide that the boss is an inappropriate target for negative behaviour, and/or (4) he or she acknowledges the possibility of having incomplete information.

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Pollsters and others often measure attitude and attempt to predict subsequent behaviour. Doing so often is difficult; however, observing three principles can improve the accuracy of predicting behaviour from attitudes:

- General attitudes best predict general behaviours.
- Specific attitudes best predict specific behaviours.
- The less time that elapses between attitude measurement and behaviour, the more consistent will be the relationship between attitude and behaviour (Cote 1999).

Caselet

New Attitudes at Alpha

Alpha Document Technologies was not your typical high-tech firm. It had a conservative dress code, and even supposedly "fun" activities didn't materialize. Older managers did not appreciate the younger ones trying to fix up weekend parties at a nearby pub. Young engineers ignored the company in favour of the flashier and more liberal Silicon Valley firms.

Attitudes have changed at the company, however, due to an unusual partnership. Sumeet Anand, Alpha's chairman, is 58 and belongs to Punjab. His bearing and aloofness lead most employees to address him as "sir". Nikhil Jain is 27 and graduated from a reputed management school in the country. He had joined Alpha recently as an engineer after a four-year stint with a technology major His usual attire at work is baggy pants, oversized T-shirts, earrings and lots of hair gel. Last winter, Anand invited Jain to his customary open-door session and said, "So, Nikhil, tell me what's wrong with Alpha?"

Jain took advantage of the moment, telling Anand that the company lacked vision and innovation, and spent the next hour describing new markets, the Internet, and ways to make Alpha's culture more entrepreneurial. Anand was energized by Jain's honesty. Jain was "prepared to speak what was right, not what he thought I wanted to hear". Since that meeting, Jain has been a key player in the company 's journey to change. He is the junior member of a group that meets twice a month to discuss strategy. His days often end in Anand's office, with discussions of new personnel, products, and the competition. The bond between Anand and Jain can be described as a partnership, a friendship, and a mentor–protégé relationship. It is unique, however, in that in most similar relationships, CEOs seek out employees just like themselves. Attitudes didn't prevent the two from forging a dynamic partnership.

In their first discussion during the open-door session, Jain thought Anand would grill him on the dress and attire issue—that did not happen. "The fact that he was a funky dresser suggested that he would have ideas that were younger," said Anand. "I wanted to see if we could connect." That connection has been a crucial one in the drive to turn Alpha around. Jain has been assigned to an elite team to develop an easy-to-use device that gives users access to their televisions, DVD players, stereos, and computers, so that they can send and receive music and computer files. He also oversees testing of the company's new computer chip, which is a "make it or break it" product. The going has not always been easy. Some older and moreexperienced engineers have expressed discomfort working with a team leader who is 10 years younger. At one high level meeting, Jain had

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to face a patronising verbal attack from a senior executive. However, another executive pulled him aside and told him to stick to his guns and prophesized that his enthusiasm would win everyone over.

Alpha is trying to change its culture. Dress codes have been relaxed. Managers have been told to stop hiring in their own images. Attitudes are changing, thanks to a duo that did not let their own attitudes get in the way.

Discuss the process of attitude change with respect to this case.

For example, attitude towards women in management, in general, isn't as good a predictor of whether someone will work well for a female manager as are specific attitudes towards a particular manager. General attitude towards religion is not a good predictor of specific behaviours, such as going to a certain temple, related charity or observing a specific religious holiday. However, these general attitudes may accurately predict general religious behaviour, such as overall involvement in the religious activities. Moreover, attitudes may change over time. Generally, the longer the elapsed time between the measurement of an attitude and behaviour, the less likely is that the relationship between them will be strong. The third principle is well known to political pollsters (after some earlier embarrassments), and they typically are careful not to predict voting behaviour too far ahead of an election.

Check Your Progress

4. What is the evaluative component of an attitude?
5. State the most important determinant of persuasiveness.
6. What are the aspects of work-related attitudes?

8.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Cognitions affect emotions through the activation of schemas or frameworks. It helps in identifying a person as belonging to a particular social group. This schema suggests certain traits or qualities associated with the group.
2. The accuracy of a judgement is not always reliable, because there are people who display traits, but do not belong to the group, that is typical. Relying completely on the representativeness heuristics has the danger of people overlooking other types of information.
3. James-Lange theory proposes that our subjective emotional experiences are the outcome of our almost automatic physiological reactions to various happenings.

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4. The evaluative component of an attitude refers to our feelings of like or dislike towards a particular person, item or event (what might be called an attitude object, the focus of our attitude).
5. The single most important determinant of persuasiveness is a person's credibility, the extent to which an individual appears to be trustworthy or believable. The more credible an individual is believed to be, the more effective he or she will be in changing attitudes.
6. Work-related attitudes are associated with many important aspects of organizational behaviour, including job performance, absence from work, and voluntary turnover.

8.5 SUMMARY

- All our lives we are interested in knowing about people and the world around us. We use social information available to judge others and evaluate situations.
- People use mental shortcuts to quickly understand people and situations. Like all shortcuts, they have their benefits as well as limitations.
- Strategies are used to reduce effort and decrease the extent of information overload, yet there exists a fair degree of accuracy in the judgements.
- Heuristics is one such well researched and understood mental shortcuts. It is aimed at providing single decision-making rules and drawing easy and fast conclusions.
- Availability means what comes to mind first. Here, judgements are made on the basis of easy-to-remember rule.
- In trying to understand the people and situations around us, we tend to pay greater attention to the unexpected or inconsistent information that is available.
- By paying attention to the negative events around us, we become alerted to the potential dangers surrounding us.
- Since, we are extra-sensitive to negative inputs, any such information does influence social judgements. This compels us to make good first impressions, as a way of ensuring a favourable evaluation.
- Motivated skepticism is the tendency to be skeptical about information that is inconsistent with our preferences or views.
- Heuristics, automatic vigilance and motivated skepticism are all attempts of social cognition with the minimum cognitive effort, to gain understanding of the social world, around us.

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- In Cannon-Bard Theory, the view is that when emotions are aroused, we experience both the physiological arousals that accompany it as well the subjective experiences associated with the emotion.
- The James-Lange Theory proposes that our subjective emotional experiences are the outcome of our almost automatic physiological reactions to various happenings.
- In Schachter's Two-Factor, when there is a physiological arousal we search for the causes of these feelings.
- Positive and negative events influence the way any information is organized in our memory.
- The use of minimal cognitive effort, easy availability and motivated skepticism all can explain the relations between emotions and cognitions.
- Cognitions affect emotions through the activation of schemas or frameworks. It helps in identifying a person as belonging to a particular social group.
- The evaluative component of an attitude refers to our feelings of like or dislike towards a particular person, item or event (what might be called an attitude object, the focus of our attitude).
- We can define attitude as relatively stable clusters of feelings, beliefs, and behavioural dispositions (or intentions) towards some specific objects.
- Work-related attitudes are associated with many important aspects of organizational behaviour, including job performance, absence from work, and voluntary turnover.
- Derogating the characteristics of a position we did not take and touting the benefits of the position we took may be understood as attempts to avoid cognitive dissonance.
- In the persuasion process, a target person (the individual whose attitude is to be changed) is given a message (either written or spoken) in which the information presented is designed to change his or her attitude.
- Generally speaking, the more someone appears to possess a high level of knowledge about a topic, the more persuasive that individual will be in persuading people on issues relevant to that topic.
- Persuasiveness depends not only on the characteristics of the communicator, but also on the message being communicated.
- Behavioural scientists used to contend that individual behaviours were consistent with their attitudes.

- Pollsters and others often measure attitude and attempt to predict subsequent behaviour.

8.6 KEY WORDS

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- **Cognitive Dissonance:** It refers to a mental discomfort which is experienced by a person who holds contradictory ideas, values and beliefs.
- **Heuristic:** It refers to a process which helps people to make decisions and solve problems efficiently and quickly.
- **Organizational Behaviour:** It refers to a study in which people interact with each other in groups.
- **Persuasion Process:** It refers to a process in which a target person (the individual whose attitude is to be changed) is given a message (either written or spoken) in which the information presented is designed to change his or her attitude.

8.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on social cognition.
2. What is the aim of heuristics?
3. How does false consensus arise?
4. What is automatic vigilance phenomenon?
5. What are the two main elements of persuasion process?
6. What do you understand by the term ‘social perception’?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of attitude-behaviour link and its main principles.
2. Discuss the basic aspects of social thoughts.
3. Anlayse the impact of emotions on social thoughts.
4. What is facial-feedback hypothesis? Explain in detail.
5. Discuss the importance of attitude in changing our thoughts.

8.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 9 SOCIAL INTERACTION AND INFLUENCE

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Structure

9.0 Introduction
9.1 Objectives
9.2 Interpersonal Attraction
  9.2.1 Proximity and Emotions: Explaining the Propinquity Effects
  9.2.1 Pro-Social Behaviour
9.3 Social Influence
  9.3.1 Conformity
  9.3.2 Factors Affecting Conformity and Bases of Conformity
  9.3.3 Need for Individuation and Control
  9.3.4 Aggression
9.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
9.5 Summary
9.6 Key Words
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9.8 Further Readings

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal attraction is defined as an attraction between people based on attitudinal dimensions. It is related to how much one likes, dislikes or hates someone. Pro-social behaviour is a behaviour which is intended to help others. People who possess the characteristic of pro-social behaviour keep others above his or her self.

Social influence takes place when an individual's opinions and emotions are affected by others either intentionally or unintentionally. Conformity is defined as an act in which people possessing similar attitudes, behaviours and beliefs to group norms. In social psychology, aggression is defined as a range of behaviours which can result in psychological and physical harm to either themselves or others.

In this unit, the concept of interpersonal attraction, the effects of propinquity and the exposure effect have been discussed. The importance of social influence and pro-social behaviour has been explained. The unit will also give an in-depth knowledge about conformity, its factors and the concept of aggression.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of interpersonal attraction

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- Explain the exposure effect of propinquity
- Anlayse the importance of pro-social behaviour and social influence
- Describe the concept of conformity and its factors
- Interpret the meaning of aggression in social psychology

9.2 INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

Attraction can exist between equitableness, friends, co-workers, mentors, lovers, and several others. It can be based on several factors that are as follows:

- Intellectual stimulation
- Respect for each other's opinions (beliefs)
- Sexual arousal

Attraction can be conscious or unconscious, based on thoughts, or simply gut-feelings.

Interpersonal attraction involves a like-dislike attitudinal dimension. It is based on the evaluation one person makes of another. In the early stages of a relationship, evaluations are made on the attitudinal dimension on a continuum from the positive to the negative. This leads to understanding the factors that are responsible for the feelings (refer Figure 9.1).

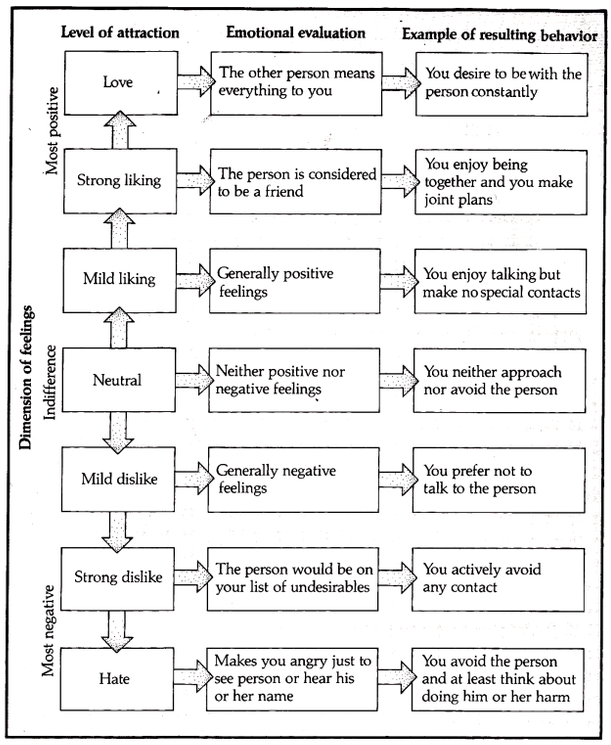

Fig. 9.1 *Dimensions of Feelings*

When strangers meet

We know hundreds of people, but we tend to form close relationships with very limited number of people from this large pool. From among these, we further narrow down our social world to a few manageable numbers. What are these factors that lead us to like some and dislike others?

The exposure effect

The exposure effect is the finding that repeated exposure to a stimulus (an object or person) leads to a greater liking for the stimulus. One of the most significant factors leading to exposure is propinquity, which means physical proximity. It is common sense that it is possible to become friends, only if one meets another often enough, develops positive feelings and then extends it into friendship. The most known examples are school students who live in the neighbourhood, or travel by the same bus, or part of an athletic team, becoming friends. Or if the parents are friends and visit each other, the children develop friendships. College mates in a similar discipline, hostel, clubs and society too become friends easily and some even get married. Similarly, colleagues in a department or on a similar assignment are likely to develop friendship, readily, as also those who share bus or car pool for travel. A professor and student could become friends, because of their constant interaction and other intellectual similarities. This principle is behind arranged marriages as well. If you live and interact with or person constantly, and there are some commonalities like background, food, language, religion and so on, the chances of liking each other are indeed, high.

Proximity leads to friendship as it enhances possible encounters. There is also the notion of functional distance, a distance which encourages contact between certain people and discourages contact between others. The positioning of houses, room windows, staircases, hallways, corridors, all form one part of the functional distance. Some of these facilitate, while others inhibit contacts. Friendships in an academy seemed to follow this propinquity principle, based on functional distance. This factor can be seen to work across age, occupations in streets, housing societies, and colonies and so on.

9.2.1 Proximity and Emotions: Explaining the Propinquity Effects

There are three main factors which make propinquity which further lead to friendships. They are as follows:

- Availability or simple contact
- The tendency to be nice to people, whom we often encounter
- The comfort created by repeated exposure

Availability due to proximity is induced higher. However, it is also possible that people we dislike, also live nearby, like an unfriendly or noisy

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neighbour. Proximity not only makes friendship likely, but it also encourages it. This makes the liking stronger. Initially, proximity leads to casual contacts from which friendships could grow. Without causal meetings and greetings in proximity, friendships would rarely develop.

The effect of anticipating interaction makes people expect and thereafter, like the person better. Psychologists, Darley and Berscheid (1967), in a study told half the participants that they would meet student A; the other half were told that they would meet student B. The two students were similar on both the counts. Yet each group liked that student whom they expected to meet more than the other. Favourable expectations lead to favourable/positive behaviour. However, there are instances when familiarity does lead to dislike. Yet, the positive relationship to familiarity is a compelling one. Thus, it can be concluded that we are nice to people whom we expect to meet.

Psychologist, P A Nutting (1987) studied and found support for that third reason of propinquity leading of friendship based on the idea that with repeated exposure, the anxiety and doubts about the unknown is absent. This is indeed comforting and therefore naturally perceived to be appealing. F C Bernstein (1992, 1993), a renowned psychologist found that for stimuli which are subliminal (below the threshold of awareness), repeated exposure is more effective than supraliminal ones (above the awareness threshold). This technique is used to manipulate consumer behaviour through advertising.

Propinquity does not claim 100 per cent effectiveness in bringing about attraction, but it certainly increases the possibility. One needs to be in the proximity to increase the chances of becoming friends. Proximity is a potent determinant of friendship.

Similarity, people tend to like others, who are similar to themselves, an American psychologist, E Berscheid and a professor of psychology H T Reis (1998).

Studies show that couples have more similar interests and likings than a random pair. The factors of similarity included social class, religion and physical characteristics. Some of the factors are as follows:

- **Complementarity:** Complementarity is the tendency for people to seek out others with characteristics that are different from and that complement their own. This is the counter theory to similarity as the basis of attraction. Heterosexuality is the best biological example of complementarity. A dependent person can benefit from someone who is dominant, or a quiet person may get along well with one who likes to talk and so on. The yin and yang or notions of the trinity in Hinduism—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva—are supreme examples of complementarity. However, complementarity is best only when limited to personality characteristics and their resultant functions. Complementarity of attitudes or beliefs could lead to disharmony.

People from different ethnic lack grounds, religions and beliefs, have to overcome these differences to relate to each other in a healthy manner.

- **Similarity:** A hard worker may not want to be with one, who is lazy. Similarity promotes attraction by validating one's beliefs and orientations; for example, religion and fan of adventure sport. Similarity also facilitates smooth interaction. This makes it easier to carry the friendship forward; for example, being a vegetarian, or an environmentalist. It is also expected that similar others like us; this tendency makes for further smoothness in interactions.

  We also believe that similar others have qualities that we like. The values, tastes and habits of people similar to us, would be both right and acceptable to us. This is a great facilitator of interaction leading to close friendships.

- **Physical attractiveness:** Physical attractiveness is one of the most powerful determinants of interpersonal attraction. Attractive people have a distinct advantage in most situations. Attractiveness draws attention immediately. This is more important in the initial stages of a relationship than later on in a relationship. Empirical research also supports this formulation. Attractiveness has the advantage of 'halo effect'—the view that attractive people possess other positive qualities. Needless to say that attractive people have winning personalities. In conversations also, attractive persons are better listened to and others respond more energetically, giving them real advantages in interaction. Attractive infants receive more playful attention from doctors, nurses and mothers than the less attractive ones. This advantage continues through school, college and even into adult life.

  Attractiveness is more important in determining outcomes in a woman's life, than in a man's life. So beauty can translate into power for women. Cleopatra is a historical legend of beauty and appeal. Physical attractiveness is important for the following three reasons:

  (i) ***Immediately visible*:** It groups intelligence, competence, character and so on easily. It is a demonstrable virtue.

  (ii) ***Prestige*:** Having an attractive partner indicates your capacity to be able to draw an appealing and desirable person. Being seen in the company of attractive women boosts a man's image. It even has a beneficial impact on a man's income or status.

  (iii) ***Biological reason*:** Physical attractiveness is based on evolution. Physical attractiveness is associated with reproductive fitness. So by mating with physically fit people, the genes can be passed on. This is a far-fetched link, yet it has some merit and many takers. It is believed that it is more valid in the case of women, as compared to men. This is a form of investment in the offspring.

Typically, women look for mates whose bodily characteristics are powerful (Muscles, height). All these are related to the providing role.

Theoretical citations on attraction

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Interpersonal attraction is chiefly based on proximity, similarity and physical attractiveness. The conceptual framework for interacting these notions of attraction have to be examined. They are as follows:

- ***The reward framework:*** We tend to like those who provide rewards; at least those who make us feel good, win our affection. The rewards can come in the form of physical attractiveness, proximity and similarity (comfort level).
- ***Social-exchange framework:*** According to this view, people tend to maximize their own utility (feelings of satisfaction, well-being) from their interactions with others. So the three bases— proximity, similarity and physical attractiveness all add to the utility of an interaction.
- ***Equity theory framework:*** People are motivated to desire fairness and equity in which rewards and costs are equal for individuals involved in the interaction. So, one looks around for the most favourable of interactions.

Emotions and attraction

Human experiences of daily living are full of emotions. Affect or feelings are described in terms of being positive or negative. Specific emotions are also recognizable; for example, fear, sadness and joy. Several studies have known that these emotions do influence our overt behaviours. Music is an example. Shopping malls and stores play soft, piped music to induce people to buy more. Lighting is another condition that could alter the mood and therefore the behaviour. Sometimes, the affect can be created by the mood of the other person. We all feel happy and good in a fun atmosphere. Depressed people and their thoughts make us feel sad. Smiling at a stranger could lead to the return of a smile. Women have been shown to return smiles more than men; but a woman's smile is more likely to be returned by men than a man's smile. People in a positive mood have been found to communicate more than those in a negative mood. These suggest that moods influence attraction.

Social interaction in itself is sure to arouse emotions. The affect is generally a positive one. A compliment always results in a positive emotion, while an insult is bound to create negative feelings. When a male and female meet for the first time and the beginning of the conversation have been traced, it has been found that those using a direct opening line like a 'Hello', 'How are you?', 'Do you like this sport?' were rated as more desirable than those using smart lines, like, 'Do you like junk food?'. (refer Table 9.1).

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Table 9.1 *Making a Good First Impression*

Setting	Most-Preferred Opening Lines	Least-Preferred Opening Lines
General	*Hi.*	Your place or mine?
Bar	Do you want to dance?	Bet I can outdrink you.
Restaurant as	I haven't been here before. What's good on the menu?	I bet the cherry pie jubilee isn't sweet as you are.
Supermarket	Can I help you to the car with those things?	Do you really eat that junk?
Laundromat	Want to go have a beer or cup of coffee while we're waiting?	Those are some nice undies you have there.
Beach	Want to play frisbee?	Let me see your strap marks.

Source: *Based on data from Kleinke, Meeker and Staneski, 1986.*

Sometimes, when we are in a pleasant mood, we like not just others more, but almost everyone who are there or the conditions that exist at that time. The friend of a friend is also liked, a particular place or type of food is liked; all this because of the positive emotions that were aroused during the encounter. Certain sounds and colours get associated with feelings. Moods affect positive feelings and in turn determine the extent of attractiveness.

9.2.1 Pro-Social Behaviour

We have already discussed pro-social behaviour in the previous unit. To recapitulate, pro-social behaviour is the type of behaviour that benefits other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering. Obeying the rules and conforming to socially accepted behaviours are also regarded as pro-social behaviours. These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others, as well as for egoistic or practical concerns, such as one's social status or reputation, hope for direct or indirect reciprocity, or adherence to one's perceived system of fairness.

Check Your Progress

1. What is exposure effect?
2. Why is attractiveness one of the most powerful determinants of interpersonal attraction?
3. What are the factors which lead to utility of an interaction?

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9.3 SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social influence refers to the innumerable ways in which people impact one another. These include changes in attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviour. All these and those that result from the comments, actions or even the mere presence of others constitute social influence.

Social influence is something that everyone can relate to and has undergone. We are often targeted and are attempted to be socially influenced by politicians, friends, traders and advertisers. At the same time, we are the agents of social influence; for example, when we coax a friend to join a dance party or frown upon others. This means that we need to know how others influence and how we can create changes in others. We also need to understand how to resist some of these influences.

9.3.1 Conformity

Conformity means change in one's beliefs or behaviour in response to some real or imagined pressure from others. Pressures can be implicit, like when we decide to have a new hair-style, or a dress, or an outfit; it can be explicit, as when members of our peer group encourage us to smoke cigarettes, or any other activity. Fashion is an example of conformity pressure in large-scale action.

It is important to study the forces that create conformity. A group exerts a powerful influence on the individual members. So, there is pressure to conform if one member does not fall in line. Some of these are spoken, while the there are others which are unspoken or tacit. These rules are known as social norms. Some of the rules are explicit, like respecting national symbols and norms of exam taking, while others are implicit, such as speaking to strangers and telephone etiquettes. Whatever be the source, usually these norms are obeyed.

Conformity is required as without it, social chaos may occur. A Polish gestalt psychologist, S E Asch's (1957) in a classic study demonstrated group pressure leading to agreements. We do face situations when our judgements differ from those of the others in the group. Then the question arises how they are resolved. Subjects in Asch's study had to report their judgements in terms of which of the three comparison lines best matched the standard line.

There were accomplices of the experimenter present, unknown to the participants. On certain occasions, these accomplices offered answers that were wrong. These people also gave their answers before the subject responded. The participants then faced a dilemma; twelve out of eighteen problems were given wrong judgements.

A large number of the participants conformed to the judgement of the accomplices. When the accomplices were absent, only 5 per cent of the participants in the control groups made such errors. Some resistance was also noticed from the participants on some occasions.

Many people defy the evidence of their own senses when unanimous judgements of other persons are confronted. For example, when people do not announce their judgements aloud, sharply it shows the distinction between public compliance and private acceptance. Thus, we may conform to group pressure, without actually changing our personal views on a given matter.

9.3.2 Factors Affecting Conformity and Bases of Conformity

Asch's experiment demonstrates the powerful tendency to conform. However, it is heartening to know that this does not happen to the same extent all the time. Many variables operate to determine the extent of conformity, they are as follows:

(i) Cohesiveness: Cohesiveness is the degree of attraction that exists among the group members. We are more likely to be influenced by people whom we like. When cohesiveness is high (strongly attached to the group and their expectance is important), pressures towards conformity are much higher; than when cohesiveness is low. We readily accept the influence of friends and those we admire, than from others.

(ii) Group size: Group size refers to the number of people exerting the influence. An ideal group size of three to four members is sufficient to induce conformity. As the group size increases, the degree of conformity remains unaffected. It is so because when large numbers appear to apply pressure, some form of conspiracy or collusion is suspected. Further, as the number of persons who are targeted increases; this also results in social influence.

(iii) Social support: Social support broadly talks about either the presence or the absence of social support or support from others. This implies having an ally. When the person facing group pressure notices an ally who is defying conformity, there is marked reduction in the extent of influence. This is the phenomenon of breaking the influence. The early a support occurs; the later the resistance. Even knowing about a dissenting view existing can help in conformity lessening.

Bases of conformity

Resisting any opinion is possible if one speaks soon. It is however, interesting to study why do people conform. Psychologist, C A Insko (1985) identified several needs that make people conform to group norms. These needs are as follows:

- ***Desire to be liked*:** Being similar to others in a group is an easy way to be liked by the group. Parents, teachers, friends and others like those who are similar to them or agree with them. We conform with those whose approval and acceptance is important to us. For example, a child conforms to his or her parents' wishes. This is known as 'Normative Social Influence'.
- ***Desire to be right*:** Desire to be right is called information social influence. In order to validate our opinions and judgements, we turn to others. We use their judgements and opinion as a social reality to verify our own positions. Since, we depend on the information provided by others, we evaluate the social world according to their evaluations. People depend on others and view and hear mass-media to know about issues relevant to the group.

9.3.3 Need for Individuation and Control

Despite pressures to conform, some individuals do resist these tendencies. Two key factors leading to resistance have been identified, they are as follows:

1. The strong desire to be unique or individualistic. We want to be like others, yet not lose our identity as an individual. We all have a need to be distinct from others. This need helps in fighting the forces of conformity.
2. Another factor is the desire to maintain control over our lives that emerges due to group pressure that takes away the personal freedom and control. This also leads to the reduction of conforming to group pressure minority influence. Historical evidences show that many revolutions have been led by a small group against the majority. Scientists, thinkers, artists, activists are all examples of a small minority influencing the majority.

Influence of the minority

Serge Moscovici, a French psychologist (1985) found that under certain conditions, minorities can exert influence over the majority. Some of the conditions are as follows:

- Members must be consistent in their defiance to the majority.
- The minority must appear to be flexibly not rigid.
- The minority position must be consistent with the general prevailing trends in society; for example, in an open society, literal views can prevail.
- Holding an emphatic minority position; for example, reservation of seats for women in the Parliament in India. One group cohesively wants the change. If women and other caste factors are also included, it would become a double minority and could weaken the cause.

Not all minorities can produce change; but at least the impact would be felt. This in itself can be the beginning to ultimately foster change; for example, Indian Freedom Struggle.

9.3.4 Aggression

Aggression means behaviour that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed. Since, it entails the perception of intent, what looks like aggression from one point of view may not look that way from another, and the same harmful behavior may or may not be considered aggressive depending on its intent. Intentional harm is, however, perceived as worse than unintentional harm, even when the harms are identical.

Check Your Progress

4. What do you understand by the term 'conformity'?
5. State the premise of the phenomenon of breaking the influence.
6. What are the conditions in which minority can influence exert influence on majority?

9.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The exposure effect is the finding that repeated exposure to a stimulus (an object or person) leads to a greater liking for the stimulus.
2. Attractiveness is one of the most powerful determinants of interpersonal attraction because it draws attention immediately. In conversations also, attractive persons are better listened to and others respond more energetically, thus, giving them real advantages in interaction.
3. The factors which lead to utility of an interaction are proximity, similarity and physical attractiveness.
4. Conformity means change in one's beliefs or behaviour in response to some real or imagined pressure from others.
5. When the person facing group pressure notices an ally who is defying conformity, there is marked reduction in the extent of influence. This is the phenomenon of breaking the influence.
6. The conditions in which minority can influence exert influence on majority are as follows:
   (a) Members must be consistent in their defiance to the majority.
   (b) The minority must appear to be flexibly not rigid.

(c) The minority position must be consistent with the general prevailing trends in society; for example, in an open society, literal views can prevail.

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9.5 SUMMARY

- Attraction can exist between equitableness, friends, co-workers, mentors, lovers, and several others.
- Interpersonal attraction involves a like-dislike attitudinal dimension. It is based on the evaluation one person makes of another.
- The exposure effect is the finding that repeated exposure to a stimulus (an object or person) leads to a greater liking for the stimulus.
- One of the most significant factors leading to exposure is propinquity, which means physical proximity.
- Proximity leads to friendship as it enhances possible encounters. There is also the notion of functional distance, a distance which encourages contact between certain people and discourages contact between others.
- Proximity not only makes friendship likely, but it also encourages it. This makes the liking stronger.
- The effect of anticipating interaction makes people expect and thereafter, like the person better.
- Propinquity does not claim 100 per cent effectiveness in bringing about attraction, but it certainly increases the possibility.
- Complementarity is the tendency for people to seek out others with characteristics that are different from and that complement their own.
- Complementarity of attitudes or beliefs could lead to disharmony. People from different ethnic lack grounds, religions and beliefs, have to overcome these differences to relate to each other in a healthy manner.
- Similarity promotes attraction by validating one's beliefs and orientations; for example, religion and fan of adventure sport.
- Physical attractiveness is one of the most powerful determinants of interpersonal attraction.
- Attractiveness has the advantage of 'halo effect'—the view that attractive people possess other positive qualities.
- Physical attractiveness is based on evolution. Physical attractiveness is associated with reproductive fitness.
- Interpersonal attraction is chiefly based on proximity, similarity and physical attractiveness.

- People are motivated to desire fairness and equity in which rewards and costs are equal for individuals involved in the interaction.
- Human experiences of daily living are full of emotions. Affect or feelings are described in terms of being positive or negative.
- Social interaction in itself is sure to arouse emotions. The affect is generally a positive one.
- Pro-social behaviour is the type of behaviour that benefits other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering.
- Social influence refers to the innumerable ways in which people impact one another. These include changes in attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviour.
- Conformity means change in one's beliefs or behaviour in response to some real or imagined pressure from others.
- It is important to study the forces that create conformity. A group exerts a powerful influence on the individual members.
- When cohesiveness is high (strongly attached to the group and their expectance is important), pressures towards conformity are much higher; than when cohesiveness is low.
- An ideal group size of three to four members is sufficient to induce conformity. As the group size increases, the degree of conformity remains unaffected.
- Social support broadly talks about either the presence or the absence of social support or support from others.
- Desire to be right is called information social influence. In order to validate our opinions and judgements, we turn to others.
- Aggression means behaviour that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed.
- Intentional harm is, however, perceived as worse than unintentional harm, even when the harms are identical.

9.6 KEY WORDS

- **Aggression:** It refers to a behaviour that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed.
- **Cohesiveness:** It refers to the degree of attraction that exists among the group members.
- **Group Size:** It refers to the number of people in a group exerts the influence.

- **Social Influence:** It refers to the innumerable ways in which people impact one another. These include changes in attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviour.

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9.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the factors which lead to resistance?
2. Why is it important to study the forces which create conformity?
3. Why do people conform to group norms?
4. Write a short note on social influence.
5. Why is proximity a potent determinant of friendship?
6. What is the basis of interpersonal attraction?

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the variables which determines the extent of conformity.
2. 'A group exerts a powerful influence on the individual members'. Discuss in detail.
3. Explain the factors of similarity.
4. Discuss the exposure effect and its importance.
5. Interpret the theoretical citations on attraction.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 10 GROUP DYNAMICS AND INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

Structure

10.0 Introduction
10.1 Objectives
10.2 Nature of Groups
  10.2.1 The Consequences of Belonging
  10.2.2 Nature, Function and Formation of a Group
10.3 Nature of Inter-Group Relations
  10.3.1 Intervention Techniques
10.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
10.5 Summary
10.6 Key Words
10.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
10.8 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

Group dynamics is defined as a system of psychological processes and behaviours which takes place within a group or between various social groups. It can be useful in understanding the functioning of an organization, decision-making behaviour, popularity of new inventions and techniques and so on. Group dynamics are an important part of an organization as it helps to understand the various forms of conflicts, prejudices, and the importance of cooperation, decision-making and the level of performance in a group.

Inter-group relations refer to the interactions which takes place between individuals in various groups or within the same group. Intervention techniques are the techniques which help a group to face any kind of situation without compromising on the goals of an organization.

In this unit, the concept of nature of groups, the stages related to the formation of groups and its importance has been discussed. The nature of inter-group relations and various forms of intervention techniques have also been analysed.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of nature of groups
- Analyse the criteria and stages of group formation

- Explain the nature of inter-group relations
- Interpret the various types of intervention techniques

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10.2 NATURE OF GROUPS

A group consists of two or more interacting persons who share common goals, have a stable relationship, are somehow interdependent and perceive that they are in fact part of a group, Paulus (1989).

10.2.1 The Consequences of Belonging

A group is not just a collection of individuals; there exist certain criteria of every group that are as follows:

- Members must interact, directly or indirectly.
- Must be interdependent in some manner.
- The relationship must be stable for at least (weeks, months or years).
- Interactions must be structured in some way.
- Members must perceive themselves as belonging to the group.

Belongingness to group is most important. However, it is interesting to know why people join group. We belong to several groups—the family group, the professional group, the card group, the music group, and so on. However, some of these group memberships are vital while the others are secondary; like family group is crucial, the club group is secondary. People join groups to meet their psycho-social needs. The need for the group arises because of the following reasons:

- The need to belong, for example, to a family and a nation gives some anchor, pride, security.
- To receive attention and affection (groups provide this opportunity).
- Achieve goals in a group; which individuals cannot attain singly (personal tasks like conducting a marriage, professional tasks like goal achievements).
- To obtain knowledge and information (which would not be available otherwise). For example, full members have access to privileged information in a certain situation).
- For security reasons, strength in numbers.
- To establish a positive social identity (prestige and pride).

All these could bolster one's self concept. Most people seek entry into some group, during their lifetime.

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10.2.2 Nature, Function and Formation of a Group

Stages in group socialization leading to formation groups are dynamic. People enter and leave groups and groups influence the members as much at the members influence the group. This is called group socialization. Three noticeable stages are present in all group formations that are as follows:

(i) **Evaluation:** People join and leave groups for several reasons. Most members join a group to achieve personal goals. Every member makes an assessment of the rewards and costs involved in joining a group. This is the process of evaluation. If the gains are greater than the costs, then the evaluation is positive and the decision to join the group is easy. If the costs are prohibitive compared with likely gains, then the outcome is negative and an individual may not wish to enter the group. Simultaneously, every member could also evaluate other prospective groups that are open for consideration.

(ii) **Commitment:** If the evaluation is positive, then the person shows interest and greater involvement with the members. The person also takes interest in the activities of the group.

(iii) **Role functioning:** Once the member has entered a given group then certain role functions become obligatory. Some are very casual while others take on extremely serious roles. A fully committed person takes on roles, assigned by the seniors in the group and tries to execute them to the fullest.

How groups function?

Not all members of a group act in the same way or carry out the same functions. A considerable degree of differentiation exists in the functioning of members. Different people work at different tasks and accomplish things for the group. These are roles that members are required to fulfill. Sometimes roles are assigned in a formal manner sometimes roles emerge in the course of group interaction; for example, a leader may be assigned by designation or a leader can emerge in terms of the task that needs to be accomplished.

Within a group, two types of roles have been described, viz., (i) task-oriented roles, and (ii) relations-oriented roles. The former role focuses on getting the job done, while the latter emphasizes on reducing interpersonal friction and maintaining a harmonious interaction among the members. These two are differentiated in familiar terms as the role of being a father and mother. Once the roles have been accepted, people internalize them.

Roles

Individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform a certain set of behaviour. For many people, the roles they perform define and contribute their self-concept, like Deputy Commissioner, Head

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of the department, CEO and so on. Roles help in clarifying responsibilities and obligations of the persons belonging to a group.

Roles also involve a way in which groups shape the thought and behaviour of the members. Roles can also generate conflict, for example, when members have to take on more than one role at a point in time—a task master as well as a pacifier. Another type of conflict, as seen in personal life, is being a parent as well as a professional.

At times, roles are clearly circumscribed, and the boundaries are specified. This could limit freedom; for example, a leader has to maintain a certain distance from the rest (this does limit certain interactions). This is a limitation because roles impose a structure, and this could prevent flexibility in functioning.

Another dimension along which groups functions is status—the prestige associated with a given role. Status is the social standing or rank that is seen related to a role. Some of the measures of status are office size, size of table, number of assistants, special privileges like assigned car, parking slots and travel benefits. Status is significant in determining how roles are performed.

Norms

Norms are rules by which group members are regulated. There are two types of norms, viz., prescriptive (how to behave) and post-scriptive norms (how not to behave). Almost all groups insist on norm obedience from their members.

There are norms that family members are expected to follow. Office norms control and specify how the office-goers must observe, like all members must join for dinner (in a family), office begins at 9: 00 am, lunch break 1:30–2:00 pm (in office).

Cooperation or Cohesiveness

Cooperation or Cohesiveness is the force that acts to keep group members part of a group. This includes mutual attraction, interdependence, shared goals and so on. It is cohesive if the members like one another very much, strongly desire the goals that the group is seeking, and feel that another group would not satisfy their needs. The opposite of this situation is when the members do not like each other much, do not share common goals and find that other groups could offer them more satisfactory memberships. The first condition would lead to cohesiveness, while the latter would lead to disintegration of the group.

Cohesiveness involves the following two distinct elements:

(i) ***Interpersonal cohesiveness*:** Interpersonal cohesiveness refers to the extent to which members like each other.

(ii) ***Task-oriented cohesiveness*:** Task-oriented cohesiveness refers to the extent to which the membership provides for the achievement of

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personal goals. For example, being a member of a sales team. The ultimate goal at the individual level comes from the group functioning; being in an assembly line manufacturing group.

When both these dimensions of cohesiveness are high, good performance can be predicted. When tasks can be carried out singly, then task-based cohesiveness is not critical. Sometimes high levels of interpersonal cohesiveness might interfere with performance because members may spend time socializing rather than focusing on the task completion.

Some of the other factors that influence cohesiveness are as follows:

- The extent of difficulty in gaining entry into the group (greater effort, more attraction).
- The presence of external threats or severe competition, invasion from outside, more unity/cohesiveness.
- Size—small groups are found to be more cohesive.

All these jointly determine the influence of the group on members. Figure 10.1 illustrates an overview of Janis' theory on groupthinking.

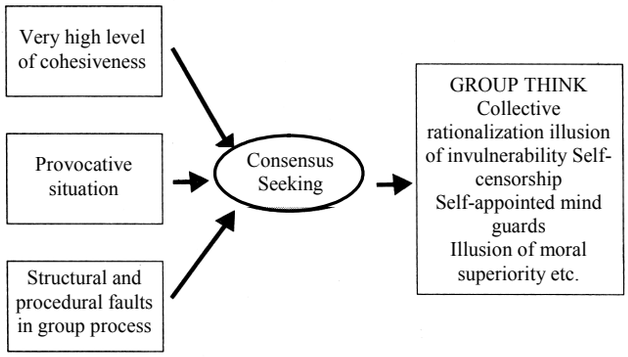

Fig. 10.1 *Groupthinking: An Overview of Janis' Theory*

Performance

Group-level performance is a performance which focuses on the process and outcomes of individuals or groups. Individuals work on their own specific goals which have been set by the leader of the group. Individuals by working on their specific goal can help to achieve the goal of the group. A group may be project-related group, for example, group working on the launch of a new product.

Decision-making

Decision-making is a situation in which individuals collectively make decisions from the alternatives which have been presented before them. The decision is not longer attributed to an individual rather it is attributed to the

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whole group. It is so because the group works together as a team to achieve its targets and they also possess same social influence, for example, group polarization.

Conflict

Conflict or hostilities in a group is a most common feature and can occur because of difference in opinions, ideas or personal conflict between two or more individuals. It can be divided into two types that are inter-group conflict and intragroup conflict. In the former, conflict occurs between other groups while in the latter, conflicts occur between a same group.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the two main types of norms?
2. How is task-oriented role different from relations-oriented roles?
3. What is group socialization?

10.3 NATURE OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

In this section we will discuss the nature of inter-group relations.

Inter-group conflict is considered inevitable, as group interactions are essential for organizational performance. The ideological differences make or mar their performances. Conflict is functional or dysfunctional. If it is helpful for achieving organizational goals it is functional; and when it is detrimental to achieving the goal, it becomes dysfunctional. The differences caused by personality and leadership give negative results to the organization. Inter-group conflict is caused by goal incompatibility, differences in decision-making requirements and performance expectations. Goal incompatibility is observed because of time and goal orientation and barriers to goal achievement. Decision-making differences are created because of task uncertainty and the non-availability of resources. The interdependence of the groups creates performance differences. The conflict is treated through avoidance, defusion and confrontation.

Intra-individual Conflicts

The management tries to achieve the goal through motivation and cooperation of all employees. Employees are expected to perform their respective roles. However, in reality, employees having different needs and roles are unable to cooperate with the management. There are positive and negative aspects of goal compatibility which cause conflicts. Intra-individual conflicts arise due to frustration, goals and roles.

Conflict due to Frustration

Frustration occurs when expectations are not fulfilled. There are several barriers to achievement of desired goals. These barriers create frustration. Employees react to the barriers and resort to aggression, withdrawal, fixation and compromise techniques. The expectation arises out of a need deficiency. When employees feel the need, they develop drives to achieve the goal after overcoming the barriers.

Barriers: The drive to achieve the goal is reduced by barriers which may be overt and covert. Overt barriers are outward and physical. They influence the goal achievement process and create frustration. Similarly, covert barriers are inward and mental. Learning helps reduce covert barriers.

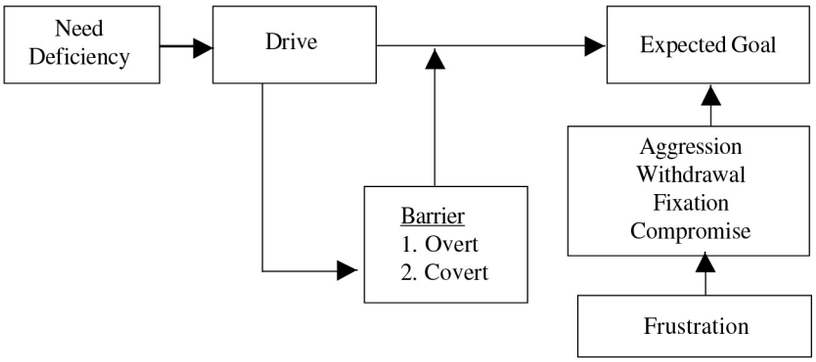

Fig. 10.2 *Frustration and barriers*

Defence mechanisms: The employees resort to defence mechanisms for reducing the impacts of barriers. First, they blame the barriers and abuse them for non-achievement of the goal. Secondly, they withdraw from the barriers and become restless to achieve the goal. Thirdly, they fix the goal and try again to attain the goal. Fourthly, they compromise with the situation if they are unable to achieve the goals, and satisfy themselves with whatever is achieved.

Frustration leads to non-compliance of the job and non-achievement of the goal in the beginning. If employees are motivated to reduce the frustration, they try harder to overcome the barriers. They direct their functions towards achievement of the goals. Frustration is unhealthy only when it dominates the person concerned. Frustration should not power or over-power the employees; otherwise they are led to non-performance. Frustration should develop the adjustment process. People should try harder to overcome frustration and the causes of frustration, i.e. barriers to the goal. Thus, frustration may be positive as well as negative when attempting to achieve organization goals.

Goal Compatibility: Employees face intra-individual conflicts on account of goal incompatibility. Frustration arises where a single motive is blocked

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before the goal is achieved; and in goal conflicts, two or more motive is blocked in the process. Goal conflicts are witnessed in approach-approach conflicts, approach-avoidance conflicts and avoidance-avoidance conflicts.

Approach-approach conflict: The approach-approach conflict relates to two or more positive but exclusive goals. The approach-approach conflict is a case of cognitive dissonance. It is a state of psychological discomfort. Persons motivated with dissonance are highly motivated to reduce or eliminate it. The choice between two goals becomes more difficult. It causes goal conflict.

Approach-avoidance conflict: In the case of approach-avoidance conflict, both positive and negative characteristics are observed. Individuals are sometimes motivated to achieve the goal, and at other times are motivated to avoid the goal. When approach-avoidance takes place, the employees are anxious to take corrective decisions. Internal conflicts and stress are visible in such cases. Approach-avoidance conflicts create health problems for employees.

Avoidance-avoidance conflict: The avoidance-avoidance conflict reveals two or more negative but mutually exclusive goals. It is easily resolved. Many employees avoid the goal achievement approach in the case of goal incompatibility. People may leave the organization if they are unable to get an adequate salary. It is an example of avoidance conflict.

Goal conflicts are used to motivate people. When the realized conflicts are resolved, people are motivated to achieve goal through the building up of compatibility.

Role Conflicts

Role ambiguity is another cause of intra-individual conflict. People play their respective roles in an organization as per their status and cadre. An employee has also to perform different roles outside the organization as father, son, teacher, and friend and so on. Considering the different roles to be performed in and outside an organization, it becomes difficult for an employee to perform all the roles successfully. Conflicts are bound to arise. Organizational roles are more important than multiple individual roles in organizational behaviour. Many a time, employees are unable to understand clearly their respective roles. They perform whatever they find convenient. Expectation from the employees to perform their role also creates conflicts because expectations may not be fulfilled. Employees expect that their supervisor would be a kind-hearted and helpful man, but he or she may believe in controlling all the employees by his crude behaviour. The supervisor has to satisfy his manager as well as the employees. His or her job involves inter-role conflict. He or she has to perform the jobs of a manager and an employee. He or she feels ambiguous while playing his role, which causes inter-role conflict. Role ambiguity is accompanied with role authority. The supervisor for example, is unable to understand his authority to discharge

his duties. The role ambiguity creates conflicts which are resolved initially by making the employees aware of their roles, helping them in acceptance of conflicting pressures and increasing their ability to tolerate stress through personality development.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a baseless and negative attitude towards certain members of a group. It may develop because of various beliefs, tendency to discriminate between the members, grudges against individuals, personal feelings. Prejudice hinders the progress of a group more than conflicts.

10.3.1 Intervention Techniques

There are some other strategies which are used for resolving interpersonal conflict. They are lose-lose, win-lose, win-win, role set, linking pin and resolving conflicting groups. These have been discussed in the following section.

Lose-lose: Under the lose-lose strategy, both parties lose and this may take several forms. A middle path is taken to resolve conflicts where both parties lose to a certain extent. Sometimes, one party may partially pay off the loss suffered by another party. Arbitrators or judges are appointed to solve a problem, where both the parties suffer. Lose-lose strategy shows the inaction of both the parties because they fight to lose. It is not a wise step to resolve, but there is no alternative left before resorting to lose-lose strategy.

Win-lose: Two parties are fighting to achieve success, but only one of them can win while the other loses the struggle. For example, a manager may be successful in suppressing the employees demand, or the employees will be successful in getting their demand redressed resulting in the loss of money by the organization. Companies have to pay more bonus and salaries to the employees. Conflicts are judgmental. Win-lose strategies have functional and dysfunctional consequences. It creates a hostile atmosphere because the losing parties keep in mind the loss of the battle and take revenge when a situation arises.

***Win-win*:** Both the conflicting parties win the battle. No one is the loser. Creativity, productivity and profitability are increased by mutual agreement. The manager asks striking employees to raise productivity for getting more bonuses, for which they are on strike. Production and profitability linked to bonus are the outcomes of the win strategy. It eliminates any of the dysfunctional factors. It is associated with better judgement, experience and wise parties. Managements should try to exercise win-win strategies for resolving conflicts because they create healthy atmosphere in the organization.

Role set: Many interpersonal conflicts are due to overlapping and ambiguous role sets. Robert L Kahn, an American psychologist is closely associated with the role set theory of organization. He suggested rearranging of overlapping

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and interlocking role sets for resolving conflicting problems. Kahn and his associates have suggested that conflict and ambiguity tend to work more with a higher rank person.

Linking pin: Each group has linking pin which is used for resolving the conflicts. It has upward origination. A trade union is linked with a political party which is headed by a person. There may be horizontal linkage too. Linkages for communication, influence, motivation and coordination are considered for resolving the conflicts. In group and out-group linkage is observed in Indian business houses.

***Resolving conflicting group*:** Group conflicts are resolved through avoidance, defusion, containment and confrontation. The avoidance strategy keeps the conflict from surfacing by ignoring the conflict or by imposing a solution. The defusion strategy is to cool off emotions and hostilities of the conflicting parties through mutual cooperation. Under the containment strategy, some conflict is allowed to surface while other problems are contained by spelling out their solutions. The confrontation strategy brings all the issues into the open. The fighting group directly confronts the issues. They ultimately resolve the problems through mediators.

Check Your Progress

4. How is inter-group conflict caused?
5. What are the consequences of Win-lose strategies?
6. How are group conflicts resolved?

10.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. There are two types of norms, viz., prescriptive (how to behave) and post-scriptive norms (how not to behave).
2. The task-oriented role focuses on getting the job done, while the relations-oriented role emphasizes on reducing interpersonal friction and maintaining a harmonious interaction among the members.
3. Stages in group socialization leading to formation groups are dynamic. People enter and leave groups and groups influence the members as much at the members influence the group. This is called group socialization.
4. Inter-group conflict is caused by goal incompatibility, differences in decision-making requirements and performance expectations.

5. Win-lose strategies have functional and dysfunctional consequences. It creates a hostile atmosphere because the losing parties keep in mind the loss of the battle and take revenge when a situation arises.
6. Group conflicts are resolved through avoidance, defusion, containment and confrontation.

10.5 SUMMARY

- A group consists of two or more interacting persons who share common goals, have a stable relationship, are somehow interdependent and perceive that they are in fact part of a group.
- People enter and leave groups and groups influence the members as much at the members influence the group. This is called group socialization.
- People join and leave groups for several reasons. Most members join a group to achieve personal goals.
- Every member makes an assessment of the rewards and costs involved in joining a group. This is the process of evaluation.
- If the evaluation is positive, then the person shows interest and greater involvement with the members.
- Once the member has entered a given group then certain role functions become obligatory.
- Not all members of a group act in the same way or carry out the same functions. A considerable degree of differentiation exists in the functioning of members.
- Sometimes roles are assigned in a formal manner sometimes roles emerge in the course of group interaction; for example, a leader may be assigned by designation or a leader can emerge in terms of the task that needs to be accomplished.
- Within a group, two types of roles have been described, viz., (i) task-oriented roles, and (ii) relations-oriented roles.
- Individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform a certain set of behaviour.
- Roles also involve a way in which groups shape the thought and behaviour of the members.
- Another dimension along which groups functions is status—the prestige associated with a given role. Status is the social standing or rank that is seen related to a role.

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- Norms are rules by which group members are regulated. There are two types of norms, viz., prescriptive (how to behave) and post-scriptive norms (how not to behave).
- Cooperation or Cohesiveness is the force that acts to keep group members part of a group. This includes mutual attraction, interdependence, shared goals and so on.
- Sometimes high levels of interpersonal cohesiveness might interfere with performance because members may spend time socializing rather than focusing on the task completion.
- Group-level performance is a performance which focuses on the process and outcomes of individuals or groups.
- Decision-making is a situation in which individuals collectively make decisions from the alternatives which have been presented before them.
- Conflict or hostilities in a group is a most common feature and can occur because of difference in opinions, ideas or personal conflict between two or more individuals.
- Inter-group conflict is considered inevitable, as group interactions are essential for organizational performance.
- Decision-making differences are created because of task uncertainty and the non-availability of resources.
- The management tries to achieve the goal through motivation and cooperation of all employees.
- The drive to achieve the goal is reduced by barriers which may be overt and covert. Overt barriers are outward and physical.
- Frustration leads to non-compliance of the job and non-achievement of the goal in the beginning.
- Goal conflicts are used to motivate people. When the realized conflicts are resolved, people are motivated to achieve goal through the building up of compatibility.
- Role ambiguity is another cause of intra-individual conflict. People play their respective roles in an organization as per their status and cadre.
- Some of the intervention strategies used for resolving interpersonal conflict are lose-lose, win-lose, win-win, role set, linking pin and resolving conflicting groups.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- **Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict:** It refers to a conflict which reveals two or more negative but mutually exclusive goals.

- **Decision-Making:** It refers to a situation in which individuals collectively make decisions from the alternatives which have been presented before them.
- **Interpersonal Cohesiveness:** It refers to the extent to which members like each other.
- **Task-Oriented Cohesiveness:** It refers to the extent to which the membership provides for the achievement of personal goals.

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the two main forms of cohesiveness?
2. What is the criterion related to the formation of groups?
3. Write a short note on the importance of roles in a group.
4. What are the factors which influence cohesiveness?
5. Why is goal incompatibility observed in a group?

Long Answer Questions

1. Why are groups important for an organization? Discuss in detail.
2. Explain the stages related to formation of groups.
3. Interpret the nature of inter-group relations.
4. Discuss the various forms of conflicts observed in a group.
5. Analyse the various types of intervention techniques.

10.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - IV

SOCIAL COGNITION

NOTES

UNIT 11 INDIVIDUAL LEVEL PROCESSES

Structure

11.0 Introduction
11.1 Objectives
11.2 Perception
11.3 Attribution
11.3.1 Attribution Theories
11.3.2 Biases
11.3.3 Attitude Formation
11.4 Change
11.4.1 Resistance to Change
11.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
11.6 Summary
11.7 Key Words
11.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
11.9 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Perception is defined as the identification, organization and interpretation of sensory information in order to understand and represent the environment or information. There is a tendency in humans to assign causes to their behaviour and actions. Attribution is thus, the process in which individuals explain the way they behaved in a given circumstance.

Attitude is defined as certain belief and behaviour towards a person or an object. Attitudes are not stable and thus, keep on changing because of the presence of social influences. It is important to accept the changes in order to adjust to the environment and circumstances. However, people resist to changes too.

In this unit, the concept of perception, its factors and the attribution process and theory have been discussed in detail. The unit will also help to analyse the concept of change and the ways in which people accept and resist changes.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the process of perception and its factors
- Explain the process and theory of attribution
- Analyse the concept of change
- Interpret the ways in which people resist changes

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11.2 PERCEPTION

People receive stimuli from the environment through the five senses: taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch. Everyone selectively pays attention to some aspects of the environment and selectively ignores other aspects at any particular time. For example, an apartment dweller may listen expectantly for a friend's footstep in the hall but ignore sounds of the people upstairs. A nurse working in a post-operative care unit might ignore the smell of a recently disinfected instrument or the sound of co-workers talking nearby. Yet, a small flashing red light on the nurse station console is immediately noticed because it signals that the patient's vital signs are failing. These are examples of a selection process involving both external and internal factors that filter sensory perceptions and determines which will receive the most attention. The individual then organizes the stimuli selected into meaningful patterns.

How people interpret what they perceive also varies considerably. A wave of the hand may be interpreted as a friendly gesture or as a threat, depending on the circumstances and the state of mind of those involved. In organizations, managers and employees must confront the possibility of events and others' behaviour. A person's interpretation of sensory stimuli will lead to a response, either overt (actions) or covert (motivation, attitudes, and feelings) or both. Each person selects and organizes sensory stimuli differently and thus has different interpretations and responses. Perceptual differences help to explain why people behave differently in the same situation. People often perceive the same things in different ways, and their behavioural response depends, in part, on these perceptions.

The perceptual process begins when environmental stimuli are received through our senses. Most stimuli are screened out; the rest are organized and interpreted based on various information-processing activities. The resulting perceptions influence our emotions and behaviour towards these objects, people, and events (Cronshaw and Lord 1987).

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Perceptual Selection

The phone is ringing, your television is blaring, a dog is barking outside, your PC is making a strange noise, and you smell coffee brewing. Which of these stimuli will you ignore? Which will you pay attention to?

Perceptual selection is the process by which people filter out most stimuli so that they can deal with the most important ones. Perceptual selection depends on several factors, some of which are in the external environment and some of which are internal to the perceiver (Kinchla 1991).

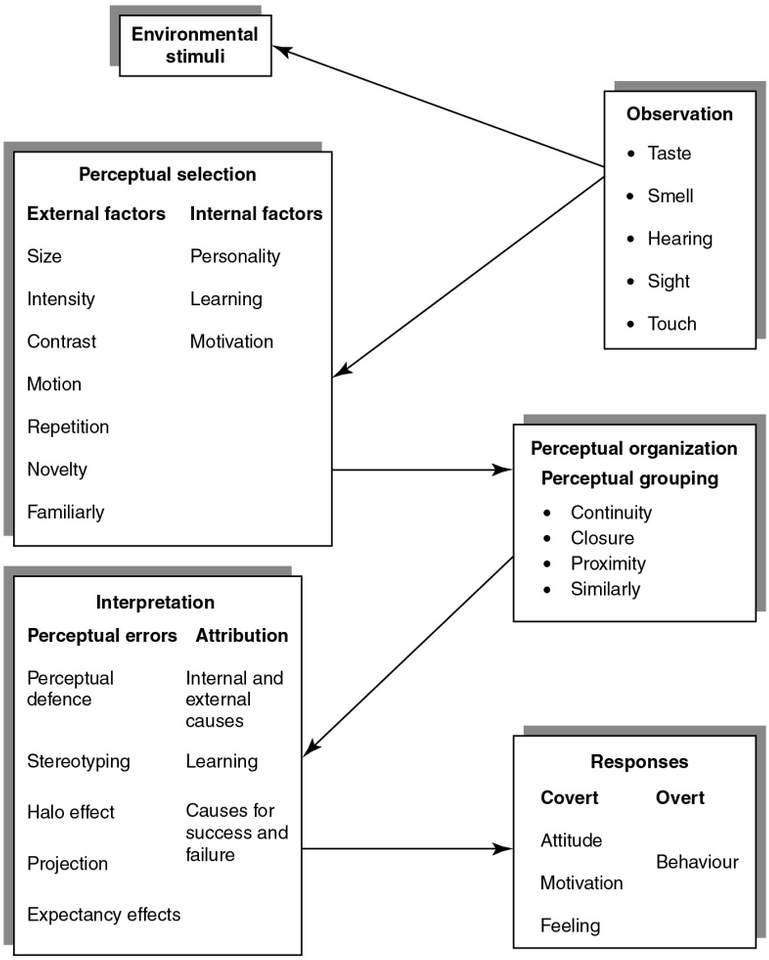

Fig. 11.1 *Basic Stages in the Perceptual Process*

External Factors

External perception factors are characteristics that influence whether the stimuli will be noticed. Some of the external factors important in the selection of stimuli are as follows:

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Size: The larger the size of an external factor, the more likely it is to be perceived. A relatively taller person is more likely to be noticed as compared to a person with average height. Similarly, it has been observed that if we increase the size of an advertisement, it generally results in an increase in its readership. If we increase the print size of the advertisement, the odds of it capturing the attention of the consumer will increase.

Intensity: The more intense an external factor, the more likely it is to be perceived (bright lights, loud noises, and the like). For example, a loud noise on the road while students are attending a lecture diverts their attention towards the intense stimulus.

Contrast: External factors that stand out against the background or that are not what people expect are the most likely to be perceived. In addition, the contrast of objects with others or with their backgrounds may influence how they are perceived. For example, something written in colour on the whiteboard is likely to catch people's attention.

Motion: Movement or an illusion of movement also tends to receive more attention. A moving factor is more likely to be perceived when compared to a stationary factor. Soldiers in combat learn this principle very quickly. Video games also illustrate the principles that motion is quickly detected. People are attracted by neon lighting and by billboards with rotating bars that carry a different message on each surface.

Repetition: A repeated factor is more likely to be perceived than a single factor. Marketing managers use this principle in trying to get the attention of prospective customers. This is an important factor aimed at increasing the readership of an advertisement. An advertisement may repeat key ideas, and the advertisement itself may be presented many times for greater effectiveness.

Novelty and Familiarity: Either a familiar or a novel factor in the environment can attract attention, depending on circumstances. People quickly notice an elephant walking along a city street. Both novelty and size increase the probability of perception. You are likely to first perceive the face of a close friend among a group of people walking towards you.

A combination of these or similar factors may be operating at any time to affect perception. In combination with certain internal factors of the person doing the perceiving, these external factors determine whether any particular stimulus is more or less likely to be noticed.

Internal Factors

Internal perception factors are aspects of the perceiver that influence perceptual selection. Some of the more important internal factors include the following:

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Personality

Personality has an interesting relationship with perception. In part, perceptions shape personality; in turn, personality affects what and how people perceive. Any of the personality dimensions (as discussed in the chapter on personality), along with numerous other traits, may influence the perceptual process. For example, individuals with high internal locus of control will attribute the success or failure of their efforts to themselves and, therefore, will perceive the external environment accordingly, whereas individuals with external locus of control will hold the external environment responsible for his or her failures. An individual who is high on authoritarianism would like to control his or her subordinates and seek compliance from them and generally perceive them as being incompetent. However, a person who is low on authoritarianism will perceive his or her subordinates as being efficient and, therefore, may rely on delegation and empowerment.

Learning

Another internal factor affecting perceptual selection is learning, which can lead to the development of perceptual sets. A perceptual set is an expectation of a perception based on past experience with the same or similar stimuli.

In organizations, past experiences and learning of managers and employees strongly influence their perceptions. For example, imagine an architect, an interior decorator, and a real estate appraiser—all employed by a design and engineering firm—approaching a tall office building in Mumbai. These three individuals may notice distinctly different things about the building. The architect may first notice the architectural style and the construction materials used in the building. The interior decorator may quickly perceive the décor of the building. The appraiser may focus on the general condition of the building and of the surrounding area, and factors that would influence the building's price and saleability. Each person pays attention to a different aspect of the same general stimulus because of the individual's training and work experience.

Motivation

Motivation also plays an important role in determining what a person perceives. A person's most urgent needs and desires at any particular time can influence perception.

Most people would have had the following frustrating experience. While taking a shower, we may faintly hear sounds like the telephone ringing. Do we get out of the shower, dripping wet to answer it? Or do we conclude that it is only your imagination?

Our behaviour in this situation may depend upon factors other than the shrillness of the ringing. If we are expecting an important call, you are

likely to scurry out of the shower. If we are not expecting a call, you are more likely to attribute the ringing sound to other noises in the shower. Our decision, then, has been influenced by your expectations.

This example illustrates a significant aspect of perception: internal factors such as motivation influence the interpretation of sensory information. Similarly, an employee whose firm has just announced the pending layoff of 5000 workers is more sensitive to help-wanted advertisements than an employee of another firm whose job is not threatened.

In general, people perceive things that promise to help satisfy their needs and that they have found rewarding in the past. They tend to ignore mildly disturbing events but will perceive dangerous ones. Summarizing an important aspect of the relationship between motivation and perception is the 'Pollyanna principle', which states that people process pleasant stimuli more efficiently and accurately than unpleasant stimuli (Matlin and Gawron 1979). For example, an employee who has received both positive and negative feedback during a performance appraisal session with her boss may more easily, clearly, and pleasantly remember the positive statements rather than the negative statements.

Check Your Progress

1. How does the perceptual process begin?
2. What is perceptual selection?

11.3 ATTRIBUTION

The attribution process refers to the manner in which people come to understand the cause of others' (and their own) behaviour (Harvey and Wells 1988). Attributions play an important role in the process of perception. Attributions made about the reasons for someone's behaviour may affect judgements about that individual's fundamental characteristics and traits.

The Process

Basically, people make attributions in an attempt to understand the behaviour of other people and to make better sense of the environment. Individuals do not consciously make attributions in all circumstances (although they may do so unconsciously much of the time). However, under certain circumstances, people are likely to make causal attribution consciously. Attribution theory has been proposed to develop an explanation of how we judge people differently depending on the meaning we attribute to a given behaviour (Kelley 1971). When we observe a person's behaviour, we ascribe its cause either to internal factors or to external factors. If the behaviour is a result of internal factors,

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it is under the control of the person. If the cause is external, it is the result of the intensity of the situation faced by the person.

Figure 11.2 presents a basic model of the attribution process. People infer 'causes' to behaviours they observe in others and these interpretations often largely determine their reactions to these behaviour. The perceived cause of behaviour reflects several antecedents: (1) the amount of information the perceiver has about the people and the situation and how that information is organized by the perceiver, (2) the perceiver's beliefs (implicit personality theories, what other people might do in a similar situation), and (3) the motivation of the perceiver (for example, the importance to the perceiver of making an accurate assessment).

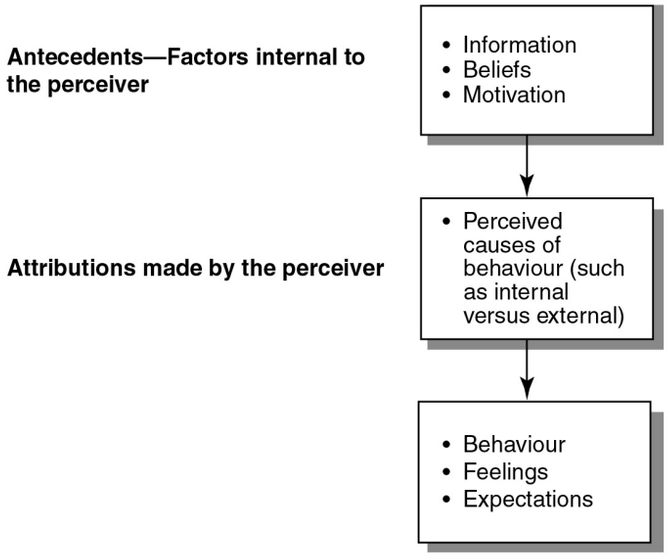

Fig. 11.2 *The Attribution Process*

Consequences for the Perceiver

The perceiver's information and beliefs depend on previous experience and are influenced by the perceiver's personality.

Based on information, beliefs, and motives, the perceiver often distinguishes between internal and external causes of behaviour; that is, whether the behaviour is due to a real desire or the pressure of circumstances. The assigned cause of the behaviour—whether internal or external—helps the perceiver attach meaning to the event and is important in understanding the subsequent consequences for the perceiver. The consequences of this attribution process are the subsequent behaviour of the perceiver in response to the behaviour of others, the impact on feelings and emotions (how the perceiver now feels about the events, people, and circumstances) and the effects on the perceiver's expectations of future events or behaviour. This could be discussed with the help of a simple example.

Suppose an employee reports late to office on a particular day. His or her tardiness can be attributed to either internal or external causes. He or she might have been late as a result of watching a late-night movie and, therefore, not being able to wake up in the morning on time, which is an internal cause within the person's control. Another reason could be being caught up in a traffic jam and, therefore, not being able to reach on time, which is an external cause not under the person's control.

Internal Versus External Causes of Behaviour

A central question in the attribution process concerns how perceivers determine whether the behaviour of another person stems from internal causes (such as personality traits, emotions, motives, or ability) or external causes (other people, the situation, or chance). A widely accepted model by Harold Kelley attempts to explain how people determine why others behave as they do (Kelley 1971). This explanation states that in making attributions, people focus on three major factors.

Consistency

The extent to which the person perceived behaves in the same manner as on other occasions when faced with the same situation. In the example discussed above, a lot would depend upon the number of times the person has shown that behaviour. If this behaviour (of coming late) is repeated on a number of occasions, it is a reflection of consistency in his behaviour. It could be contrasted with a person who comes late only on odd occasions. The more consistent the behaviour of the person, the more likely it is to be ascribed to internal causes.

Distinctiveness

It is the extent to which the person perceived acts differently in different situations, that is, whether it is usual or unusual. If an employee has an excellent attendance record and is an effective performer in the organization, his coming late or being absent from the job could be ascribed to external factors that are not under his control. However, if the behaviour appears to be usual, that is, he has a habit of being late or absenting him or her very often, it could be ascribed to internal causes that are under his personal control.

11.3.1 Attribution Theories

The attribution theory was propounded by psychologist, Fritz Heider and can be used to observe how people observe their behaviour and of other people. It is primarily concerned with how people interpret events and their thought process. However, Weiner and his colleagues developed a theoretical framework which has become a major paradigm in the field of social psychology. The theory comprises of three-stage process: (1) an individual

must perceive other's behaviour, (2) he or she must believe that the way in which they behaved was intentional and (3) they must then, analyse whether their behaviour was forced or not.

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11.3.2 Biases

The fundamental attribution bias reflects one's tendencies to attribute another person's behaviour to his personal characteristics, as opposed to situational factors. This bias causes the perceiver to ignore environmental forces that often significantly affect the behaviour. For example, people have a tendency to believe that an individual's criminal behaviour is because of the inherent dishonesty or a personality flaw rather than due to environmental factors such as unemployment, broken family, or maltreatment during an early age.

Self-serving Bias

The self-serving bias represents one's tendency to take more personal responsibility for success rather than for failure. Referring to the earlier discussion, employees tend to attribute their success to internal factors (high ability or hard work) and their failure to uncontrollable external factors.

Errors

The most common attribution error is our tendency to explain an individual's behaviour which is based on various internal factors such as personality of the concerned person. It may also be based on external factors such as situations which affect the concerned person. The internal and external factors have been already highlighted in the previous section.

11.3.3 Attitude Formation

Attitude can be defined as a positive or negative feeling or opinion about an individual, person or an object. Attitude formation can take place either through direct or indirect experiences. It can also be formed because of persuasion of media or if an individual is inspired by his or her role model. Affect or emotion, behaviour, and cognitions are the foundation of attitude.

Check Your Progress

3. What do you understand by the term 'distinctiveness'?
4. What are the consequences of the attribution process?

11.4 CHANGE

Individual and group behaviour can vary widely across a broad spectrum of possibilities. At one extreme is active resistance; at the other is enthusiastic support for the change (see Figure 11.3). An individual's assessment of future status is influenced by fears, desires, suspicions, and beliefs. To ensure that one's apprehensions will not 'come true', the most immediate and obvious action that he can take is to protect and defend present (and known) status. He or she does this by resisting the change.

This resistance may take many forms. The particular form depends on the individual's personality, on the nature of the change itself, on attitude towards it and its environmental context. Whatever the form of resistance is, all types of opposition are a kind of aggressive or hostile behaviour.

Acceptance of Change

Just as there is a variety of behaviour in which people can resist change, there are several different ways in which they can accept change. The most positive form of acceptance is enthusiastic cooperation. Although rare, this can occur when an individual's own desires and needs, as well as those of the group of which she/he is a member, are fulfilled by expectations about the effects of the change. Even when there are few minor conflicts between one's desires and needs and that person's estimates of the effects of a change, he will still tend to accept that change because less effort is required to accept than to resist.

Group cooperation with a change can be regarded as a kind of defensive action taken by the group (Dubin 1959). It is so because the change may be perceived as a threat to the group's stability and continued integrity, members may decide that to cooperate with the change is the lesser of the two evils. They might believe that to engage in a joint venture is the best method for preserving the group's stability and integrity. They also might believe that failure to cooperate may exclude the group from any potential benefit to be derived, or may even diminish their present 'pay offs' from the organization.

Indifference to Change

Indifference to change may be the more common defence against it than is commonly realized (Dubin 1959). Indifferent behaviour is manifested in two ways. Sometimes the individual (or group) appears to ignore the problem entirely. In effect, the person is saying, 'This is really not my problem. I shan't be affected significantly'. Alternatively, the individual (or group) may appear to be actively avoiding the pertinent issues by introducing and focusing on subjects that are irrelevant to the problems at head.

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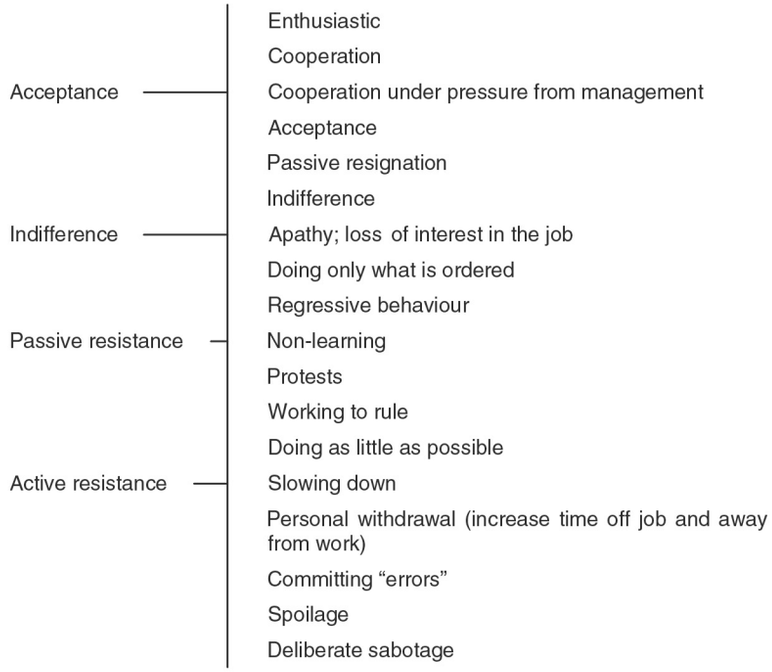

Fig. 11.3 *The Spectrum of Possible Behaviours Towards Change*

Indifferent behaviours can be a subtle form of resistance. The consequence of such behaviour may adversely affect the successful implementation of a change. Indifference might result in a slowness or difficulty in comprehending the nature of change and the requirement of new conditions. Learning new skills and procedures would slow down. Due to lack of interest, unanticipated problems arising from the change might not become apparent soon enough for ready solutions. There would be few suggestions from those involved that might contribute to the success of the change. All the effects would require management to exert more effort and devote more time than might otherwise be necessary for carrying out the change.

Organized Resistance

When a group of people are affected by a change, the intense reaction of some members might have an inflammatory effect on others. This can happen even when members have only mild feelings of frustration. Yet, a few hotheads who voice loudly their personal fears and dire predictions could stimulate the majority. When those are infectious, the group often unites and resists the change in an organized way. Those less inclined towards aggressive behaviour will nevertheless rally around the leadership provided by the more actively hostile members.

Another reason for any organized resistance is that each individual's need for self-protection, so likely to be stimulated by change, can find fulfillment in group action. Banding together in a group to resist the change

offers people who share this need for self-protection an effective means for ensuring their future security. Collective action is often more successful than separate personal resistance.

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Organized group resistance is a familiar phenomenon. One example is the limitation of output by group agreement so that attempts to increase work standards can be defeated. Another instance is group action to cover up mistakes made by members as they implement new work procedures or quality standards. A group might also act to withhold vital information from management so that they can be kept in ignorance of what is really happening in a changing situation.

Organized resistance by a group occurs when there is a conflict between the goals and interests of the group and those of the organization as a whole. These conflicts can occur at any one or more of three levels: (1) immediate work group; (2) the department or function of which the work group is a part; and (3) the 'dominant coalition'. The dominant coalition is defined as the objectives and strategies (for the organization), their personal characteristics, and the internal relationship of that minimum group of cooperating employees who oversee the organization as a whole and control its basic policy making (Kotter 1978). When the shared expectation of the group members are in conflict with organizational goals, the social control of the groups can be a powerful countervailing force to management's controls to achieve organizational goals (Schein 1969).

Whether the individual identifies himself or herself primarily with the immediate workgroup, the department or function, or the dominant coalition, the group itself may be a powerful source of resistance to a change. Once formed, any group develops needs for self-preservation and perpetuation. The more cohesive the group, the more powerful are these needs. In time, groups meet these needs in part by developing their own sub-cultures within the organizational culture. Each group may establish their own beliefs and norms; the group may generate organized resistance to the change (Cohen et al. 1976).

Sometimes, the union will provide leadership for organized resistance to a change. Every union has its own institutional requirements that must be fulfilled if it is to continue its existence by retaining the loyalty of its members. One of these requirements is the recognition of the union's power and status by the company. If management is careful to recognize this fact by discussing their plans in advance with the union, the union might be more willing to cooperate in the introduction of the change. If, on the other hand, management ignores or bypasses the union, it will inevitably oppose both management and the change so that its status will be preserved.

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Frustration and Aggression

The relationship among aggressive behaviour, hostile feeling, and frustration is a well-established psychological concept (Dollard et al. 1939). Any one of us can become frustrated when external forces conflict with the act to deny our personal desires and needs. When one believes that the future consequences of a change will conflict with present desires and needs, she/he will develop a feeling of frustration. This frustration, in turn, arouses hostile feelings. Often these feelings are directed towards the source of frustration. Sometimes, however, they are deflected elsewhere. In some instances, a person might even turn hostile feelings inwards, against himself or herself.

Anyone involved in a changing situation can become frustrated. In their most extreme form, hostile feelings can find release in aggressive behaviour towards some aspect of the change. This behaviour can take the form of deliberate sabotage. Increasing the amount of spoilages at work, slowing down the pace of working and committing unintentional 'errors' are all overt evidence of aggressive behaviour directed towards changes. A more subtle means of sabotaging a change might be the practice of following orders in the most literal fashion, or working to rule. For example, a new machine was introduced into a manufacturing operation. It was intensely opposed by the operative on the shop floor. An engineer was supervising the trial runs and a maintenance fitter from the shop was assigned to assist him or her. When carrying out the orders to make certain specific adjustments on the machine, the fitter noticed that several vital bolts had worked themselves loose. He or she did nothing about the matter because they had not been so instructed. During the next trial run, the machine become so badly damaged that it was withdrawn from the shop for extensive re-design.

Sometimes a person will resist a change by withdrawing entirely from the situation. Absence from work might increase. Or she/he might actively seek a change in the job. In extreme cases, she/he might even leave the organization.

Resistance to change can take place passive as well as active forms. Regression to less mature levels of behaviour is one possible outlet for frustration and hostility. We are familiar with the 3-year-old child who resumes thumb sucking when a new baby arrives in the family. Similarly, a manager, faced with a difficult and complicated change, might find it difficult to make any decisions at all. Or a clerk might develop problems in learning new office procedures. In some cases of frustration, a person might give up trying altogether and become indifferent, apathetic, and passive or resigned.

There are other outlets for feelings of frustration. A person might direct hostile feelings towards others who are not directly involved in the change. She/he might become a disruptive influence in the work group by picking on members who are more weak and defenseless. Or he or she might direct

aggressive behaviour towards members of social or religious minority group. Another possible way of behaving might be to become fixated to some useless activity, just as Lady Macbeth became absorbed with washing her hands regularly. Thus, to avoid facing a difficult change, a frustrated manager might focus on a low-priority task such as reorganizing the files.

Another possible consequence of frustration caused by a change is that the person affected might direct hostile feelings inwards, against himself or herself. The results might be a psychosomatic exacerbation of illnesses such as high blood pressure, ulcers, heart conditions, and asthma.

Finally, a person might turn away altogether from the source of frustration by sublimating hostile feelings. She/he might lose all interest in work and become passionately involved in gardening, local politics, or some other personal activity.

11.4.1 Resistance to Change

It is not difficult to recognize resistance to change when explicitly manifested through strikes, slowdowns, and complaints. It is more difficult to detect and cope with implicit resistance, like decreased motivation or loyalty, errors, absenteeism, and foot dragging when changes are introduced. Once resistance is detected, however, this does not mean that it should be immediately eliminated. Resistance to change is sometimes beneficial because it promotes functional conflict and debates that can promote more thorough analysis of alternatives and their consequences—if a timely response is not crucial to success. On the other hand, excessive or irrational resistance can hinder the programme and even survival, particularly if competitors are fast acting. Many times, however, change is resisted even when its benefits outweigh its costs. Why does this happen? There are several overlapping reasons that individuals and organizations resist change.

Why Individuals Resist Change

Individuals at all levels are prone to resisting change. The leaders of many of the companies dropped from the *Fortune* 500 list failed to recognize the need to change and adapt in order to survive.

The following discussion summarizes five of the main reasons individuals resist change.

1. **Selective Perception:** People have a natural tendency to perceive the same thing differently. When changes are initiated, individuals tend to focus on how they will be personally affected rather than seeing the big picture for the entire organization. For example, assume a manager announces that members of his group henceforth will be paid on piecework rather than on an hourly basis. Satish, who is fast and highly skilled, may eagerly embrace the change as an opportunity to

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increase his pay. Yogesh, a new employee may object to this decision fearing he will fall behind the others. At other times, individuals may perceive that change is incompatible with personal benefits and values.

2. **Lack of information:** People will resist change if they lack knowledge as to what is expected or why the change is impartial. If the reasons for change are not clearly presented, they tend to fill in the missing pieces, with speculation, which often assumes the worst in terms of the initiator's intentions and personal impact. In addition, if people do not have enough information about how to change, they may fear making mistakes, so they will not try.
3. **Fear of the unknown:** Individuals resist change when they are uncertain about how it will affect their well-being. They ask themselves, for example, how will downsizing or new web-based business-to-business marketing affect my job security? Other fears include uncertainties about not knowing how to change or of not being able to perform as well as before the change, losing positions, income, status, or power. There is also the possibility that work will be less convenient or more difficult, and the potential of losing desirable social interactions.
4. **Habit:** Many people prefer familiar action and events, even if they are not optimal. Have you ever tried to break a bad habit such as smoking, drinking too much coffee, or not exercising? Breaking a habit is difficult because it takes hard work and involves giving up perceived benefits from the habit, even if the new behaviour has more desirable consequences.
5. **Resentment towards the initiator:** If a change seems arbitrary or unreasonable, or its timing and manner of implementation lack concern for the people expected to carry it out, resentment and anger are often directed towards those initiating the change. People also resent being controlled and losing autonomy over their work lives when the change initiator does not consider their thoughts and feelings. Finally, without trust in the initiator's intentions, people may resist the change out of resentment or fear of possible unknown consequences.

Check Your Progress

5. Why is group action considered as a defensive action taken by the group?
6. How does organized group resistance occur?

11.5 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

NOTES

1. The perceptual process begins when environmental stimuli are received through our senses. Most stimuli are screened out; the rest are organized and interpreted based on various information-processing activities. The resulting perceptions influence our emotions and behaviour towards these objects, people, and events.
2. Perceptual selection is the process by which people filter out most stimuli so that they can deal with the most important ones.
3. Distinctiveness is the extent to which the person perceived acts differently in different situations, that is, whether it is usual or unusual.
4. The consequences of the attribution process are the subsequent behaviour of the perceiver in response to the behaviour of others, the impact on feelings and emotions (how the perceiver now feels about the events, people, and circumstances) and the effects on the perceiver's expectations of future events or behaviour.
5. Group action considered as a defensive action taken by the group it is so because the change may be perceived as a threat to the group's stability and continued integrity, members may decide that to cooperate with the change is the lesser of the two evils.
6. Organized resistance by a group occurs when there is a conflict between the goals and interests of the group and those of the organization as a whole.

11.6 SUMMARY

- People receive stimuli from the environment through the five senses: taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch.
- A person's interpretation of sensory stimuli will lead to a response, either overt (actions) or covert (motivation, attitudes, and feelings) or both.
- The perceptual process begins when environmental stimuli are received through our senses.
- Perceptual selection is the process by which people filter out most stimuli so that they can deal with the most important ones.
- Perceptual selection depends on several factors, some of which are in the external environment and some of which are internal to the perceiver.

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- External perception factors are characteristics that influence whether the stimuli will be noticed.
- External factors that stand out against the background or that are not what people expect are the most likely to be perceived.
- Movement or an illusion of movement also tends to receive more attention. A moving factor is more likely to be perceived when compared to a stationary factor.
- Internal perception factors are aspects of the perceiver that influence perceptual selection.
- Personality has an interesting relationship with perception. In part, perceptions shape personality; in turn, personality affects what and how people perceive.
- A perceptual set is an expectation of a perception based on past experience with the same or similar stimuli.
- Motivation also plays an important role in determining what a person perceives. A person's most urgent needs and desires at any particular time can influence perception.
- The attribution process refers to the manner in which people come to understand the cause of others' (and their own) behaviour.
- People, basically, make attributions in an attempt to understand the behaviour of other people and to make better sense of the environment.
- Attribution theory has been proposed to develop an explanation of how we judge people differently depending on the meaning we attribute to a given behaviour (Kelley 1971).
- Based on information, beliefs, and motives, the perceiver often distinguishes between internal and external causes of behaviour; that is, whether the behaviour is due to a real desire or the pressure of circumstances.
- A central question in the attribution process concerns how perceivers determine whether the behaviour of another person stems from internal causes (such as personality traits, emotions, motives, or ability) or external causes (other people, the situation, or chance).
- The extent to which the person perceived behaves in the same manner as on other occasions when faced with the same situation.
- Distinctiveness is the extent to which the person perceived acts differently in different situations, that is, whether it is usual or unusual.
- The attribution theory was propounded by Fritz Heider and can be used to observe how people observe their behaviour and of other people.

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- The fundamental attribution bias reflects one's tendencies to attribute another person's behaviour to his personal characteristics, as opposed to situational factors.
- The self-serving bias represents one's tendency to take more personal responsibility for success rather than for failure.
- Attitude can be defined as a positive or negative feeling or opinion about an individual, person or an object.
- An individual's assessment of future status is influenced by fears, desires, suspicions, and beliefs.
- The most positive form of acceptance is enthusiastic cooperation. Although rare, this can occur when an individual's own desires and needs, as well as those of the group of which she/he is a member, are fulfilled by expectations about the effects of the change.
- Indifference to change may be the more common defence against it than is commonly realized (Dubin 1959).
- Indifferent behaviours can be a subtle form of resistance. The consequence of such behaviour may adversely affect the successful implementation of a change.
- When a group of people are affected by a change, the intense reaction of some members might have an inflammatory effect on others.
- Organized resistance by a group occurs when there is a conflict between the goals and interests of the group and those of the organization as a whole.
- Resistance to change can take place passive as well as active forms. Regression to less mature levels of behaviour is one possible outlet for frustration and hostility.
- Resistance to change is sometimes beneficial because it promotes functional conflict and debates that can promote more thorough analysis of alternatives and their consequences—if a timely response is not crucial to success.

11.7 KEY WORDS

- **Attribution Process:** It refers to the manner in which people come to understand the cause of others' (and their own) behaviour.
- **External Perception Factors:** It refers to those characteristics that influence whether the stimuli will be noticed.
- **Internal Perception Factors:** It refers to the aspects of the perceiver which influence perceptual selection.

- **Organized Resistance:** It refers to a resistance which takes place when a group of people are affected by a change, the intense reaction of some members might have an inflammatory effect on others.

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11.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the internal factors of perception?
2. What is attribution process?
3. Why is attribution theory proposed?
4. Write a short note on attribution theory.
5. State the premise of self-serving bias.
6. Why are indifferent behaviours a subtle form of resistance?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the external factors of perception.
2. Explain the process of attribution.
3. How does a perceiver distinguish between internal and external causes of behaviour? Describe in detail.
4. Explain the ways in which people accept changes.
5. Anlayse the relationship between frustration and aggression.
6. Why do people resist changes? Discuss in detail.

11.9 FURTHER READINGS

Lindgren, H C. 1973. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited.

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UNIT 12 INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES

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Structure

12.0 Introduction
12.1 Objectives
12.2 Interpersonal Attraction
12.3 Prosocial Behaviour
12.3.1 Aggression
12.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
12.5 Summary
12.6 Key Words
12.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
12.8 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal processes refer to a systematic analysis of interpersonal behaviour. The topics covered encompasses include social-cognitive aspects of interpersonal relations such as expectancies, attribution, personal relationships such as friendship, romance, and small-group dynamics such as minority influence, cooperative learning.

In this unit, the three types of interpersonal processes, i.e., interpersonal attraction, prosocial behaviour and aggression. These topics have been discussed in detail previously. Therefore, this unit will only provide a brief recapitulation of the basics concepts.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of interpersonal attraction
- Analyse the factors related to attraction
- Explain the meaning of prosocial behaviour and aggression

12.2 INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

In the field of social psychology, interpersonal attraction is conventionally defined as a positive attitude or assessment of an individual, encompassing the three components conventionally ascribed to attitudes: behavioural (tendency to approach the individual), cognitive (positive beliefs about the individual),

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and affective (positive feelings for the individual). Another approach thinks of attraction as the desire to form a friendly or romantic relationship with a particular individual. Attraction is often treated as corresponding to liking. Loving, particularly being 'in love,' with a person, is sometimes seen as a very strong or special kind of attraction—'romantic attraction'—including exclusivity and sexual interest. Attraction in the above senses is differentiated from attractiveness—characteristics of people such as good look or desirable personality that make other people be attracted to them.

Attraction depends on the following factors:

- **Physical attractiveness:** Although people do not admit it, physical attractiveness plays a major role in attraction.
- **Proximity:** Research has shown that the best way to predict attraction is how close they live to each other.
- **Familiarity:** Proximity also results in familiarity and familiarity also enhances liking for something or a person.
- **Similarity:** Individuals with similar interests or beliefs, outlooks, tend to be attracted to one another.

12.3 PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The concept of prosocial behaviour has been discussed extensively in Unit 7. It has also been discussed in Unit 9. To recapitulate, prosocial behaviour can be defined as voluntary actions that are planned to help or benefit another person or a group of persons. This definition refers to the results of a person's actions rather than the motivations behind those actions. Prosocial behaviour encompasses a wide range of activities, including sharing, comforting, rescuing, and helping. Although prosocial behaviour can be confused with altruism, they are, in fact, two distinct concepts. Prosocial behaviour refers to an arrangement of activity, on the other hand, altruism is defined as the motivation to help people out of pure regard for their needs rather than how the action will benefit oneself.

12.3.1 Aggression

Like prosocial behaviour, aggression has been discussed extensively in Unit 6 and 9. To recapitulate, in social psychology, aggression can be defined as the type of behaviour that is intended to cause harm or pain. It can be verbal or physical in nature. Behaviour can be considered as aggression even if it does not succeed in actually harming a person. It is important to note here that accidentally harming or causing pain to someone is not considered aggression. Property damage and other destructive behaviour may also fall under the definition of aggression.

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Check Your Progress

1. What types of activities comprise the concept of prosocial behaviour?
2. Define prosocial behaviour.
3. What are the components related to the concept of attitude?

12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Prosocial behaviour encompasses a wide range of activities, including sharing, comforting, rescuing, and helping.
2. Prosocial behaviour can be defined as voluntary actions that are planned to help or benefit another person or a group of persons.
3. The components related to the concept of attitude behavioural (tendency to approach the individual), cognitive (positive beliefs about the individual), and affective (positive feelings for the individual).

12.5 SUMMARY

- In the field of social psychology, interpersonal attraction is conventionally defined as a positive attitude or assessment of an individual.
- The three components conventionally ascribed to attitudes: behavioural (tendency to approach the individual), cognitive (positive beliefs about the individual), and affective (positive feelings for the individual).
- Another approach thinks of attraction as the desire to form a friendly or romantic relationship with a particular individual. Attraction is often treated as corresponding to liking.
- Attraction is differentiated from attractiveness—characteristics of people such as good look or desirable personality that make other people be attracted to them.
- Although people do not admit it, physical attractiveness plays a major role in attraction.
- Research has shown that the best way to predict attraction is how close they live to each other.
- Individuals with similar interests or beliefs, outlooks, tend to be attracted to one another.
- Proximity also results in familiarity and familiarity also enhances liking for something or a person.

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- prosocial behaviour can be defined as voluntary actions that are planned to help or benefit another person or a group of persons.
- Prosocial behaviour encompasses a wide range of activities, including sharing, comforting, rescuing, and helping.
- Prosocial behaviour refers to an arrangement of activity, on the other hand, altruism is defined as the motivation to help people out of pure regard for their needs rather than how the action will benefit oneself.
- Aggression can be defined as the type of behaviour that is intended to cause harm or pain.
- Aggression is primarily verbal or physical in nature.
- Behaviour can be considered as aggression even if it does not succeed in actually harming a person.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Aggression:** It refers to the feelings of anger or antipathy resulting in hostile or violent behaviour; readiness to attack or confront.
- **Attraction:** It refers to the action or power of evoking interest in or liking for someone or something.
- **Interpersonal Attraction:** It refers to a type of attraction which analyses or assesses the positive attitude of an individual.

12.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUEST1ONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How is interpersonal attraction defined in social psychology?
2. What are the forms of aggression?
3. How is attraction different from attractiveness?
4. Why is behaviour considered as a form of aggression?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the factors related to the process of attraction.
2. Differentiate between prosocial behaviour and altruism.
3. Explain the concept of interpersonal attraction.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

Lindgren, H C. 1973. *An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited.

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UNIT 13 GROUP DYNAMICS

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Structure

13.0 Introduction
13.1 Objectives
13.2 Key Aspects of Groups
13.3 Group Cooperation
13.3.1 Group Conflict
13.4 Group Decision-Making
13.4.1 Decision-Making by Group and Decision-Making Processes
13.4.2 Nature of Group Decisions
13.4.3 Group Decision-Making: Some Pitfalls
13.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
13.6 Summary
13.7 Key Words
13.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
13.9 Further Readings

13.0 INTRODUCTION

Group dynamics is defined as the system of psychological processes and behaviours which occur within a group. A group can be defined as a collection of two or more people who interact with each other and accept the expectations and obligations as a member of the group.

Sherif and Sherif (1969) define a group as 'A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in role and status relationship to one another stabilized in some degree at the time and who possess a set of value or norms of their own regulating their behaviour atleast in matter of consequence to the group'. Groups are primarily of two types formal and informal. They can be formed for fulfilment of any agenda or provide social needs such as friendship, affiliation, security and so on.

In this unit, the meaning of group in an organization, the types of groups and their sub-parts have been discussed. The importance of cooperation and how it is achieved has been analysed. The unit will also discuss the concept of group decision-making and its drawbacks.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Anlayse the main types of groups
- Discuss the functions of a group
- Interpret the importance and sources of cohesiveness in a group

- Explain the concept of group decision-making
- Identify the pitfalls of group decision-making and groupthink

13.2 KEY ASPECTS OF GROUPS

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A great amount of our time is spent in group interactions. In our lifetime, we join a number of groups. The membership to some groups is mandatory whereas others are undertaken voluntarily. Work groups become the major channel for achieving organizational goals (Yammarino and Dubinsky 1990). Groups also satisfy personal needs for friendship, self-esteem, and identity (Ashforth and Mael 1989). A group can be defined as a collection of two or more people who meet regularly and influence one another over a period of time, perceive themselves as a distinct entity distinguishable from others, share common values, and strive for common objectives (Shaw 1981). When members of a group subscribe to common values, beliefs, and objectives and when there is a high level of agreement between them on these matters and how best to achieve the objectives of the group, a state of cohesiveness is said to exist. Cohesive groups emphasize the need for close cooperation in order to complete different tasks in an effective way and to create conditions in which the personal needs of members are satisfied.

Types of Groups

In most organizations, several different types of groups are present. The major classification is in the form of formal groups and informal groups. In the following section, we will discuss the subtypes of formal and informal groups.

Formal Groups

A formal group is established by management and is expected to perform well-defined tasks to achieve organizational objectives. At the organizational level, formal groups help to accomplish complex, interdependent tasks and to create new ideas (Schein 1980). At the individual level, formal groups help to satisfy the person's need for affiliation, confirm his or her identity and enhance self-esteem. Formal groups are further classified into the following:

- **Task group:** It is a temporary formal group that is established to solve specific issues. The example of a task group would include a curriculum revision committee in the university and a disciplinary committee constituted to look into specific disciplinary issues in the organization. The members of task groups do not have a reporting relationship, and the group comprises of people from different departments who possess complementary skills in the area of expertise required. As soon as the task is complete, the members disintegrate and revert to their original groups or organizations.

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- **Command group:** It is a permanent group in the organization dictated by the structure of the organization. A typical command group comprises of a supervisor exercising his authority over a set of subordinates. Different departments like finance, sales, and human resources are examples of command groups. Most organizational objectives are accomplished by command groups.

Informal Groups

Informal groups grow out of the need for friendship, affiliation, companionship, and communication between people. The membership of this group is not defined by the organization, but it is dependent upon the common values and interests shared by the employees. Some of the common examples of informal groups are 'tea or coffee groups' and clubs. Members of this group are often found to be more powerful than the members of formal groups (Meer 1985). At the organizational level, informal group helps in solidifying common social values and provide guidelines for right behaviour. They also help to provide a sense of identity and access to information. At the individual level, they satisfy the social and affiliation needs and may lead to enhanced feelings of self-esteem and status (Lunt 1991). Some common forms of informal groups are as follows:

- **Friendship groups:** Friendship groups are based on common characteristics such as age, common values, and college affiliations. They help to satisfy the affiliation needs of the members. Effective managers try to maintain good relationship with these groups as they have tremendous influence on their members (Hussein 1989).
- **Interest groups:** Interest groups comprise of individuals who share a mutual interest and group together to try to achieve their objectives. These groups may not have any relationship with the formal task groups of the organization. For example, individuals who come together to fight for a common cause such as smoking or alcoholism form an interest group.

Functions of a Group

Groups tend to help individuals and organizations in a number of ways. Broadly, groups serve two kinds of functions in an organization: task and maintenance (Schein 1980). These functions have been discussed in the following section:

Task Functions

Groups carry out certain task functions to achieve organizational goals. These are as follows:

- **Handling complex tasks:** When the task is too complex for an individual to perform alone, perhaps because it requires competence

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and expertise from different areas, it requires the help of a number of individuals working together.

- **Liaison or coordinating function:** Groups also serve to act as coordinating mechanism among the members of their own group as well as with groups outside.
- **Implementation of complex decisions:** Implementation of complex decisions requires the understanding and contribution of a large number of employees of the organization. A group acts as a catalyst to implement such decisions.
- **Generating new and creative ideas:** The interaction between group members results in the generation of a large number of new and creative ideas.
- **Vehicle for training new employees:** In a group context, it becomes easier for the new member to get socialized and understand the norms of the group and the organization. As jobs in organizations have become complex and interdependent, the role of groups cannot be underestimated.

Maintenance Functions

Maintenance functions are performed to take care of the personal needs and expectations of the individual members. They include the following:

- **Fulfilling the need for social interaction:** Individuals have an innate need for care, friendship, affiliation, and support. Groups help them fulfill these needs.
- **Providing a sense of identity and self-esteem:** If the group that one belongs to in an organization has a high status, the individual members derive a sense of identify and self-esteem from their membership.
- **Solving personal problems:** Group provide emotional support and help individuals confront personal problems and crisis.
- **Reducing anxiety and uncertainty:** Groups help people to reduce their anxiety and uncertainty by allowing individuals to share and discuss their concerns with other members.

Check Your Progress

1. How is formal group helpful for an organization?
2. What are interest groups?
3. How do groups help in reducing anxiety in people?

13.3 GROUP COOPERATION

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In situations of high levels of agreement among group members with regard to values and beliefs, cohesiveness is likely to exist in the group. Cohesiveness promotes sharing of similar ideas and the mutual acceptance of these ideas. In high-cohesiveness groups, the close interpersonal bonds of its members who highly value their association and want to maintain it hold all the members together (Keyton and Springston 1990). The more cohesive a group, the more effective it will be in meeting member needs and the more conformity it can demand from its members.

Sources of Cohesiveness

There are factors that have been identified to help to induce and sustain the cohesiveness of the group. Some of these factors are as follows (Summers et al. 1988):

- **Similarity in attitude and goals:** The assumption is that people with similar attitudes and goals will find each other's company comfortable. Cohesion is also likely to be high if the goals of the groups are clearly specified and are compatible with the person's needs. Incompatibility between the personal and the organizational goals will bring about disagreements and, therefore, lower the degree of cohesiveness.
- **Successful attainment of the goal:** If the goals are accomplished successfully, it results in generating positive feelings among members and, therefore, the members generally like to be together. It there are a series of failures, members tend to point fingers at each other, therefore, lowering the group cohesiveness.
- **Size:** With an increase in size, there are fewer opportunities for interaction among members. The communication begins to break down and cohesiveness decreases. Smaller groups tend to create conditions conducive for cohesiveness because of the greater degree of interaction between members. The ideal size of the group is between five and seven members who can contribute effectively to the group, while retaining cohesiveness. A group of more than ten members tend to create anonymity among the group members and results in the creation of sub-groups, thereby reducing the cohesiveness.
- **Charismatic leader:** If the group has a leader who is charismatic or has members who are personally attracted towards each other, cohesiveness is likely to be high. Attraction may be based on common values, common interest, and support for each other.
- **Threats:** The cohesiveness of the group is expected to improve in situations of external competition or threats. In such conditions, the importance of interdependency is underlined. For example, in situations

where unreasonable demands are made by the management for change in work practices, the members may become more cooperative and try to fight it together. This results in the creation of shared resistance, increased commitment to the group, and tighter bonds among members. Cohesiveness increases as the members dedicate themselves to the common threat.

- **Membership to high-status group:** Membership to high-status groups are valued by the members of the group. If the group has been relatively successful in the past and indulges in activities that bring fame and are regarded important, the particular group is said to possess high status. Since entry to this group is a difficult process, individuals possessing the membership would like to retain it and make the group cohesive.
- **Rewards:** Incentives based on group performance cultivate a group-centred perspective, where cooperation rather than competition prevails. As a result of this, the cohesiveness among the members of the group increases.
- **Gender:** Women are thought to be more cooperative and less competitive with people whom they see as friends or team mates. Many studies conducted report that all female groups are more cohesive than all male or mixed-sex groups.

13.3.1 Group Conflict

Intragroup conflict is a form of interpersonal conflict. It includes disagreements between group members on certain issues, thereby leading to ineffectiveness in the group's functioning. It is a very common feature of family-run businesses where the conflict becomes more intense when the owner or the founder is about to retire or dies untimely.

Intergroup Conflict

Conflicts between teams and groups are termed intergroup conflicts. They result because of opposition, disagreements, and disputes between the teams. It can have both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, the intergroup conflict increases the cohesiveness among the group members, thereby generating enhanced commitment and loyalty towards the group. On the negative side, it distances people from each other in organizations and enhances the gap between teams and departments. The teams start seeing each other as the enemy and become hostile to each other. When the number of negative relationships among members is high, the probability of intergroup conflict increases (Libianca et al. 1998).

A heightened level of intergroup conflict can be dysfunctional for organizations. In organizations, when groups compete for a common goal in situations of scarce resources, such conflicts are likely to result in

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aggression and hostility towards each other. Managers should try to encourage cooperative behaviour among members by rewarding such behaviour and also try not to be prejudiced towards certain set of groups or individuals. They should encourage intergroup or interdepartmental activities so that a desirable level of trust can be established. This trust will allow members to openly exchange ideas and resources with each other and will result in high level of cooperation among them.

Check Your Progress

4. What is intragroup conflict?
5. State any one negative affect of intergroup conflict.

13.4 GROUP DECISION-MAKING

Groups perform a variety of tasks the world over—harvesting, assembly line functions, constructions and surgical procedures. One of the most important activities of a group is decision-making. Government, military, corporations, educational institutions (even families) are all required to take decisions as groups. Most of our laws and policies are decided by groups.

13.4.1 Decision-Making by Group and Decision-Making Processes

We all believe that groups have pooled expertise, group decisions tend to be less extreme and several inputs are possible. Therefore, we think that group decisions are better and always tend to seek them.

Group decision-making process

We will discuss how people move towards consensus. When a group starts discussing any topic, it begins with a variety of assumptions and opinions. After some discussions, there could be a deadlock and finally a decision is made. There are a number of procedures by which the members arrive at a decision. They are as follows:

(i) ***Majority wins rule*****:** It means that the position adopted by the majority of the group members, becomes the decision. Here, discussion strengthens the most popular point of view.

(ii) ***The truth-wins rule*****:** The correct solution or decision on a given issue is adopted as the decision.

(iii) ***Two-thirds majority rule*****:** If two-thirds of the members of a group endorse a particular decision, then that prevails.

(iv) ***First-shift rule*****:** A decision that is consistent with the direction of the first-shift in opinion indicated by a member.

Generally, these processes seem to be sufficient for arriving at group decisions. Wherever opinions are involved, the majority position is favoured. In intellectual tasks, the truth-wins rule is adopted as most suitable.

Procedures determine decisions

The methods used for arriving at a decision often influence the decisions. Some of the methods are as follows:

- ***Straw poll*:** Straw poll is more in the form of opinion seeking from among the members. Members are therefore, free to change their views. Here, each member expresses his/her opinion sequentially. Members express their preferences in a non-binding vote. This can lead to significant shifts in the positions held and then the decision is reached as a group.
- ***Deliberation style:*** Deliberation style refers to the manner in which members exchange information about their individual views. Two styles have been identified that are as follows:
  - (i) *Verdict driven*: Here, members first arrive at their own personal decision and then discuss the decision with other members.
  - (ii) *Evidence driven*: Each piece of relevant information is examined by the group first, and then individual decisions are made

    In verdict driven deliberation style, the personal decision is discussed and in evidence driven deliberation style, each piece of data/information is discussed. For example, the way the financial frauds are discussed, involving the various groups; sometimes the panelists express their opinions, in others the data is analysed.
  - (iii) *Conjunctive decision*: Taking the example provided, if the members conclude that there was clear intention to swindle, then they will decide to find those involved in the fraud. This is conjunctive decision.
  - (iv) *Disjunctive decision*: Again, taking the example just discussed, if the criteria of a fraudulent conduct is analysed according to data available and then the decision about the guilty is made, it is one of disjunctive decision. So, the style of deliberating on an issue has an impact on decision-making.

13.4.2 Nature of Group Decisions

Does it produce moderation or polarization? Rarely do individuals take decisions on important matters. Even dictators and monarchs have their advisors. The parliament or the senate in a democracy is a decision-making body. Qualifications, training experience and so on all involve those who would be entrusted with decision-making. This is superior to individual decision-making.

Group decision-making

In a study by Stoner (1961), students had to play the role of advisers to persons who had to choose between the following two alternatives:

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(i) Highly paying job-Corporate job

(ii) Low paying but secure job-Government job

In the first part of the study, the subjects made individual recommendations, about the job. Then, they met in small groups, and discussed the matter, until a unanimous agreement was reached.

Surprisingly, groups recommended the high-risk jobs. However, in later studies with larger groups, it was found that the group decision tended to be more cautions. This contradictory finding was explained on the basis of the concept of Group Polarization, i.e., group decisions tended to become more extreme and not necessarily more cautious or more risky. Group decision-making enhanced the existing positions held by the members. So, if one held a cautions position initially, it became stronger after the group discussed choice of jobs, or vice-versa.

Social comparison and persuasive arguments are two explanations offered for group polarization. The social comparison approach holds that before a group decision, people believe that their view is the better one and that their views are in the right direction. After the group discussion, they are rudely awakened by the realization that their views are nowhere as far above the average as that of the group. So, they shift their position to an extreme degree.

Persuasive arguments provide a contrasting explanation for polarization. After group discussions, individual members slowly convince themselves of the correctness of their initial views, and thus, come to adopt them even more strongly. This results from the shift to an extreme position. Most of the information presented by group members is in support of their own position.

Polarization has important implications. Group decisions could become extreme after discussions. The decision to escalate the Vietnam War (USA), the dissolution of the Soviet Union and liberation of Bangladesh are important polarized decisions in the world, in the last few decades of the 20th century.

13.4.3 Group Decision-Making: Some Pitfalls

Some of the pitfalls of group decision-making are as follows:

- Polarization is a serious matter for accurate decision-making to happen. However, there are other disadvantages also in group decisions. Group think is one such potentially harmful way for groups to decide a course of action.

- Another is the inability of group members to pool their expertise while discussing any issue. They do not discuss information not shared by all members.

Group think represents too much cohesiveness. Generally, high cohesiveness is expected to produce highly desirable outcomes for a group. This is true up to a point. Psychologist, Janis (1982) proposed the term groupthink where high levels of cohesiveness exist with certain other conditions that are as follows:

(i) Provocative situation – a group is fighting for survival against external adversaries

(ii) Structural and procedural faults (lack of means for resolving internal conflicts)

These conditions could lead to groupthink.

Group think is a mode of thinking that members of a group are locked into. Here, the main thinking is concurrence seeking. This is the overreaching motivation. All courses of action are evaluated with this in mind. Group think therefore, involves a shift from the concern of making the best possible decision to that of reaching and maintaining consensus. Once groupthink sets in, unhealthy decision making could follow.

Some of the pitfalls of groupthink are as follows:

- Members view themselves as invulnerable (they possibly cannot make a mistake).
- They engage in collective rationalization (discrediting or ignoring contrary positions/information).
- They feel that their group is not only right, but morally, superior (all those who do not share these views are evil).
- Once group think develops, pressure on members to go along with the group stated view becomes intense.
- Members, who have some doubts, engage in some form of self-censorship; otherwise they are quickly silenced by the other group members. To top it all, the mind-guards (self-appointed) shield the group from external sources of information that is inconsistent with the group's position.

Result

A powerful illusion takes hold of the group into believing that the group is correct and is infallible and has no dissent.

Some research studies on groupthink, however, do not fully support Janis's position when applied to decisions made in the international context. The phenomenon of group think does exist. However, it's powerful and how often it comes into play is in some doubt.

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Countering group think: Managing the effects of group thinks

- Groups should promote open inquiry and skepticism among members.
- Leaders must encourage careful questioning of each alternative.
- As a rule, play the devil's advocate.
- Form subgroups to consider different aspects of an issue.
- Subgroups are freer to engage in sharper discussions and can halt possible consensus happening too soon.
- Offer second-chance meetings. Those with lingering doubts have an opportunity to express themselves. This can reduce pressures towards conformity.
- Encourage new ideas and open oneself to criticisms in a non-defensive manner.
- Always avoid premature closure of any issue.

All these could counter tendencies towards groupthink.

Sharing information

Often group members tell each other what they already know; rarely do they tell what others do not know. Group members only discuss that information what others already know. So where is the pool of information? Then how is group decision better than individual decision? Do groups get the benefit of expertise and knowledge of individual members? To test the validity of information sharing in a group discussion studies were carried out using the information sampling process. Here, the information that was mostly mentioned during group discussion was examined. It was found that information that was most discussed was the one available already to most members. Thus, members tell each other what they already know.

This means, the unshared information is often withheld. If the members recognize that the unshared information is crucial for a correct answer or decision, then perhaps this new input would be offered. If merely reaching a consensus is the focus, then the value of the unshared information would be minimized.

The hidden profile of information would be needed if a good decision is to be arrived at.

Conclusion

Groups are always better at re-hashing information that is already known to members. Groups must be made aware that the unshared information is important for coming up with the correct decision. This would increase the possibility that group members will uncover and discuss unshared information. Unshared information prevalent among groups is found to enhance the quality of decisions, if given and discussed.

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Check Your Progress

6. What are the disadvantages of group decision-making?
7. What is majority wins rule?
8. Define deliberation style.

13.5 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Formal groups are beneficial for the organization as it helps to accomplish complex, interdependent tasks and to create new ideas.
2. Interest groups comprise of individuals who share a mutual interest and group together to try to achieve their objectives.
3. Groups help people to reduce anxiety and uncertainty by allowing individuals to share and discuss their concerns with other members.
4. Intragroup conflict is a form of interpersonal conflict. It includes disagreements between group members on certain issues, thereby leading to ineffectiveness in the group's functioning.
5. Intergroup conflict distances people from each other in organizations and enhances the gap between teams and departments.
6. The following are the disadvantages of group decision-making:
   (a) Polarization is a serious matter for accurate decision-making to happen. However, there are other disadvantages also in group decisions. Groupthink is one such potentially harmful way for groups to decide a course of action.
   (b) Another is the inability of group members to pool their expertise while discussing any issue. They do not discuss information not shared by all members.
7. Majority wins rule means that the position adopted by the majority of the group members, becomes the decision. Here, discussion strengthens the most popular point of view.
8. Deliberation style refers to the manner in which members exchange information about their individual views.

13.6 SUMMARY

- A group can be defined as a collection of two or more people who meet regularly and influence one another over a period of time, perceive themselves as a distinct entity distinguishable from others, share common values, and strive for common objectives.

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- Cohesive groups emphasize the need for close cooperation in order to complete different tasks in an effective way and to create conditions in which the personal needs of members are satisfied.
- A formal group is established by management and is expected to perform well-defined tasks to achieve organizational objectives.
- At the organizational level, formal groups help to accomplish complex, interdependent tasks and to create new ideas.
- At the individual level, formal groups help to satisfy the person's need for affiliation, confirm his or her identity and enhance self-esteem.
- Task group is a temporary formal group that is established to solve specific issues.
- Command group is a permanent group in the organization dictated by the structure of the organization.
- Informal groups grow out of the need for friendship, affiliation, companionship, and communication between people.
- At the organizational level, informal group helps in solidifying common social values and provide guidelines for right behaviour.
- Friendship groups are based on common characteristics such as age, common values, and college affiliations.
- Interest groups comprise of individuals who share a mutual interest and group together to try to achieve their objectives.
- Broadly, groups serve two kinds of functions in an organization: task and maintenance.
- Maintenance functions are performed to take care of the personal needs and expectations of the individual members.
- In situations of high levels of agreement among group members with regard to values and beliefs, cohesiveness is likely to exist in the group.
- Cohesiveness promotes sharing of similar ideas and the mutual acceptance of these ideas.
- In high-cohesiveness groups, the close interpersonal bonds of its members who highly value their association and want to maintain it hold all the members together.
- Cohesion is also likely to be high if the goals of the groups are clearly specified and are compatible with the person's needs.
- The ideal size of the group is between five and seven members who can contribute effectively to the group, while retaining cohesiveness.
- The cohesiveness of the group is expected to improve in situations of external competition or threats.

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- Intragroup conflict is a form of interpersonal conflict. It includes disagreements between group members on certain issues, thereby leading to ineffectiveness in the group's functioning.
- Conflicts between teams and groups are termed intergroup conflicts. They result because of opposition, disagreements, and disputes between the teams.
- Groups perform a variety of tasks the world over—harvesting, assembly line functions, constructions and surgical procedures.
- Deliberation style refers to the manner in which members exchange information about their individual views.
- Group decision-making enhanced the existing positions held by the members. So if one held a cautions position initially, it became stronger after the group discussed choice of jobs, or vice-versa.
- Polarization is a serious matter for accurate decision-making to happen. However, there are other disadvantages also in group decisions.
- Group think represents too much cohesiveness. Generally, high cohesiveness is expected to produce highly desirable outcomes for a group.
- Groups must be made aware that the unshared information is important for coming up with the correct decision.

13.7 KEY WORDS

- **Formal Group:** It refers to a group which is established by management and is expected to perform well-defined tasks to achieve organizational objectives.
- **Group:** It refers to a collection of two or more people who meet regularly and influence one another over a period of time, perceive themselves as a distinct entity distinguishable from others, share common values, and strive for common objectives.
- **Interest Groups:** It refers to a group which comprise of individuals who share a mutual interest and group together to try to achieve their objectives.
- **Maintenance Functions:** It refers to function which are performed to take care of the personal needs and expectations of the individual members.

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13.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the two main types of formal groups?
2. Why are informal groups formed in an organization?
3. Write a short note on intergroup conflicts.
4. State the most important activity of a group.
5. What are the factors which help to determine decision in a group?
6. What is group polarization?

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the sources of cooperation in a group.
2. Discuss the functions of a group in an organization.
3. Why is cohesiveness important in a group? Explain in detail.
4. Describe the drawbacks of group think.
5. Explain the procedure related to group decision-making.

13.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 14 SOCIAL PERCEPTION

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Structure

14.0 Introduction
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14.2 Non-Verbal Communication
14.3 Attribution: Understanding the Causes of Other Behaviour
14.3.1 Theories of Attribution
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14.0 INTRODUCTION

Social perception is defined as the study in which people make impression about other people and how they behave as individual personalities. They learn about other people through their feelings and emotions or by gathering information about them through groups or various forms of communication which may take place between them, especially non-verbal communication. It is so because non-verbal communication helps people to send messages through wordless cues. Their gestures and actions can help people to understand individuals.

It has been observed that we often assign causes to others' actions and behaviours. Attribution is defined as a process in which individuals can explain their behaviour and its causes or events related to it. Impression formation and management helps one to analyse the impression which we may want to develop on other individuals. On the other hand, social cognition helps to interpret the social conditions of a given circumstance and how people process the information. Groups are formed in an organization so that it can provide basic emotional need to the members.

In this unit, the meaning of non-verbal communication, the theories of attribution and its process have been discussed in detail. The concept of impression formation and management and social cognition has been explained. The unit will also discuss about the types of groups, the importance of group decision-making and group think.

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14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of non-verbal communication
- Explain the theories of attribution
- Analyse the concept of impression formation management and social cognition
- Explain the formation and types of groups
- Interpret the meaning of group decision-making and groupthink

14.2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The process of communication involves the sending and receiving of messages through words as well as without words, while the outcome of communication (or the 'product') determines the meaning of verbal and non-verbal messages. Clearly, we do not communicate *to* others, but *with* them. Therefore, it is fair to say that communication may be viewed as both a process and a product with the goal of sharing a common idea. It is important to observe at this point that communication is a kind of behaviour, and behaviour communicates. Such behaviour frequently produces results—often, though not always, favourable.

During verbal communication, we use words to which symbols have been arbitrarily assigned and expect that everyone involved will share the same interpretation of these words. However, communication often gets its breath of life from messages not involving words or speech. In fact, people often seem to have more faith in non-verbal cues than they do in verbal—both spoken and written—messages. For instance, if a person says one thing but transmits a conflicting message non-verbally, listeners will almost invariably tend to believe the non-verbal signal. Non-verbal communication refers to the sending and receiving of wordless messages conveyed through such means as gestures, body movements, facial expressions, tones of voice, colours, spaces, and styles of dressing. The look in one's eyes, the wrinkles on one's forehead, the curve of the lips and the movements of the head and hands are reflections of one's mood, thoughts, and feelings. Even silence may sometimes speak more loudly and clearly than words. On the other hand, using appropriate gestures and facial expressions to reinforce what one wants to communicate adds to its impact. This happens because listeners tend to process non-verbal cues automatically and almost unconsciously. Clearly, non-verbal communication can aid or affect the efficacy of verbal communication. Non-verbal communication broadly covers the seven components which are as follows:

1. Body language
2. Kinesic communication
3. Proxemic communication
4. Haptic communication
5. Paralinguistic communication
6. Chromatic communication
7. Chronomatic communication

Few would challenge the fact that we communicate almost incessantly with the external world and keep sending out non-verbal messages *all the time,* knowingly or unknowingly. According to an estimate, there are over 700,000 forms of non-verbal communication. Therefore, it makes sense for us to become more aware not only of *what* we are communicating, but also of *how* we are communicating and, most importantly, of how we *look* while communicating. We must become aware of our gestures and postures, our body movements (kinesic communication), our space language (proxemic communication), our touch behaviour (haptic communication), our voice modulation (paralinguistic communication), our dress sense and selection of colour (chromatic communication), and our time sense (chronomatic communication).

Most of us do not tell each other how we feel about each other (without specific cause); nor do we usually tell a person how our words need to be interpreted. Instead, we often use non-verbal communication to communicate our feelings, intent, and the meanings of our words.

14.3 ATTRIBUTION: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF OTHER BEHAVIOUR

We have already discussed the concept of attribution in the previous unit. To recapitulate briefly, attribution can be defined as the process by which individuals explain the causes of behaviour and events. Models to explain this process are called attribution theory. Let us discuss these theories in detail.

14.3.1 Theories of Attribution

Attribution theory is intended to help us understand the causes of human behaviour, be it our own or someone else's. The basis of attribution theory is that we want to know the reasons for the actions that we and others take; we want to attribute causes to behaviours we see rather than assuming that these behaviours are random. This allows us to assume some feeling of control over our own behaviours and over situations. Psychologist Fritz Heider (1896–1988) first developed attribution theory in his 1958 book, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. Heider proposed that what people

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perceived and believed about what they saw dictated how they would act, even if their beliefs about what they perceived were invalid.

Knowing others is useful in several ways. It helps us determine our interactions towards others. Knowing about the causes behind other person's behaviour is the key to regulate our behaviour in relation to others; and attribution is one such process that relates information about others.

The importance of other people in our lives makes us want to create the best possible impression in others' minds. This has led to research in the field of how impressions are formed and then the attempts are made to know how impressions can be managed to obtain the most favourable outcomes.

Attribution is our attempt to understand the causes behind others' behaviour on specific occasions. The mechanism underlying attribution as has been studied by E.E. Jones and K E Davis (1965) and H H Kelley (1972).

Jones and Davis (1965) called their theory 'The Theory of Correspondent Inference'. This theory examines how we use information about others' behaviour as a basis for inferring that they possess various characteristics or traits. This theory seeks to determine an individual's lasting disposition from his/her overt actions.

Overt actions to determine specific traits

Not every action is a valid predictor of a person's stable traits. There are conditions that provide a valuable link to a person's long-lasting disposition. According to the theorists, behaviours that reflect a person's inherent traits are those that occur by one's free choice, that yield distinct outcomes (not produced by others) and that are low in social desirability.

This theory provides a useful framework for knowing how we utilize the behaviour of others, to understand some key traits processed by them. When attributions about stable traits existing in a person are made from overt behaviours; Jones and Davis argue that our conscious intentional resources get focused on certain behaviours leaving us with limited cognitive resources to observe other details of the behaviour. This brings up the usefulness of the attributions.

Gilbert, Pelham and Krull (1988) studied how we infer other's traits from overt behaviours. They identified three parts which are as follows:

- Categorization: It deals in what the behaviour is about.
- Characterization: It decides what traits a person possesses.
- Correction: It inferences about the situation in which the behaviour has taken place.

The researchers conclude that when we are busy; we tend to make mistakes about our attributions. However, with practice corrections are made and the attributions improve. Kelley's theory of causal attributions proposes

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that in order to understand the 'why' about other person's behaviour, three major dimensions are focused upon that are as follows:

(i) **Consensus:** The extent to which other people react similarly to the same event.

(ii) **Consistency:** The extent to which the person being observed reacts to the same event in a nearly similar manner, on most occasions.

(iii) **Distinctiveness:** The extent to which a person reacts in the same manner to other stimuli and events.

Kelley's theory suggests that attributions are made on the basis of internal and external causes. When behaviour is determined by internal causes, consensus and distinctiveness are low, but consistency is high. In contrast, when external causes determine the overt behaviour, consensus, consistency and distinctiveness, are all high. Behaviour is attributed to a combination of these factors when consensus is low, but consistency and distinctiveness are high (refer Figure 14.1).

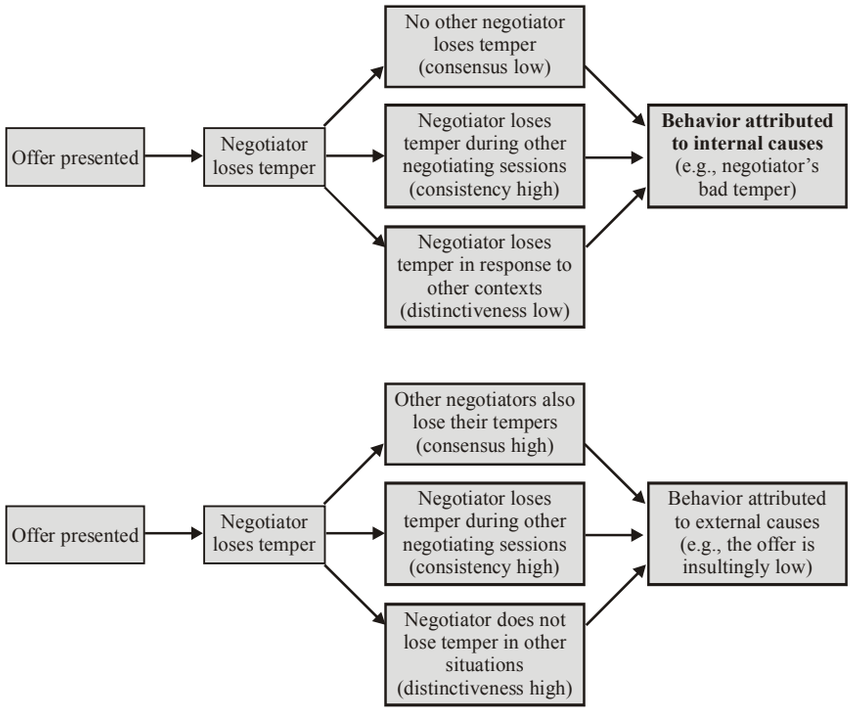

Fig. 14.1 *Kelley's Theory of Casual Attributions: Some Concrete Examples*

Kelley's theory in use with a concrete example shows how internal and external causes are attributed to the behaviour of losing one's temper during a business negotiation. This appears to be a reasonably good description of the success of the attribution process. Another attribution principle is the augmenting and discounting principle. For example, a mother shouts angrily at a child.

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One possible attribution is that the mother has a bad temper and is a poor parent. Then, we learnt that the child was screamed at because he ran out onto a heavy traffic street. So, we realize there are two possible causes for the mother's behaviour and temper, because the child's action is dangerous. This is known as the discounting principle. There is a reduction in the attribution made about the mother, because another potential danger as a cause also exists.

A second scene is when the mother yells at the child when a grandparent is present. The presence of the grandparent is expected to soften the screaming at the child. It is expected that the child would be spoken to calmly and reasonably. Here, the attribution of scolding is attributed to the augmenting principle which states that when the inhibition factor (grandmother) and the facilitating factor (angry outburst from the mother) are both present, the facilitating factor gets to dominate. So, the attribution is made about the foul temper of the mother.

These two principles need to be taken into account while carrying out attributions, especially in situations where information about consistency and distinctiveness is found wanting.

Attribution biases

Attribution is not to be viewed as a very rational process following orderly cognitive steps. Several types of biases can creep into this process. Types of errors that can harm the attribution processes are as follows:

(i) **Overestimating the role of dispositional factors:** This was suggested by psychologists, Gilbert and Jones (1986). Let us take an example; a person comes late to a meeting. His or her hair is in a mess and they drop some important papers and as he is rushing, he knocks over a table and later spills coffee on his clothes, while drinking. The ready attribution made would be of a clumsy, disorganized person. However, it is possible that he was late because of some traffic holdup, dropped his papers because the floor was slippery and dropped the tray because the cup was wobbly. These missing potential causes can be regarded as a fundamental attribution error caused by a strong tendency to overestimate dispositional factors. Therefore, in the mentioned example, the internal factors got more attention than the external ones, leading to the attribution error. Thus, the neglect of situational factors and greater importance that was given to internal/dispositional factors in trying to understand a given behaviour has to be watched out for.

(ii) **Actor–observer effect:** This is another type of attribution error (Jones and Nisbett, 1971). We generally tend to attribute our own behaviour to external factors, but we tend to see the behaviour of other people as caused by internal factors. This occurs because we are aware of the

situational factors affecting our reactions, but as observers we are less aware of these factors when we see the actions of others. This means our role as an actor is different from our role as an observer. Both these positions lead to attribution errors.

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(iii) Self-serving bias: This is the tendency to attribute positive outcomes to internal causes and negative outcomes to external causes, leading to errors in attribution. For example, if a student does well in the exam, means that he/she is bright. However, when a student does poorly in an exam, the teacher was no good, the questions were out of syllabus, or the marking was strict.

Reasons for attribution biases

Two explanations are given for the occurrence of such tilts—cognitive and motivational.

Cognitive model indicates that self-serving bias stems from the way we process social information (L. Ross, 1977). There is a need to protect our ego, so when we succeed, outcomes are attributed to internal causes and when we fail they are attributed to external causes. The need to look good in the eyes of others and manage our self-esteem is the motivational explanation for the presence of self-serving bias. Failure is attributed to external causes in those conditions which are beyond our control. Luck is an external factor used in attributions of failure by most people. Self-serving bias protects and preserves the self-esteem. Attributions help in understanding, but they have to be carried out with care.

14.3.2 Impression Formation and Management

We have discussed impression formation and management previously. Here, we present a brief recapitulation. Impression formation means the process by which singular pieces of information about another person are integrated to form a complete impression about the person. Behind this entire process is the notion that a person expects unity and coherence in the personalities of others. As a result, a person's impression of another should be similarly unified. There are two theories related to the process of impression management. The first is the Gestalt approach which thinks that the formation of a general impression is the sum of several interrelated impressions. The central aspect of this theory is the idea that a person seeks to form a coherent and meaningful impression of another person, previous impressions significantly influence or colour his or her interpretation of subsequent information. On the other hand, the second theory, which is the cognitive algebra approach, argues that singular experiences of people are examined independently, and combined with previous examinations to form a constantly changing impression of an individual.

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14.3.3 Social Cognition

The concept of social cognition examines how individuals process, store, and applies information about other individuals and social situations. It emphasizes on role that cognitive processes play in our social interactions. The way we think about others plays a major role in how we think, feel, and interact with the world around us.

14.3.4 Social Information Heuristics and Automated Processing

Just like in attribution, in social cognition also people use the least amount of cognitive effort in arriving at conclusions about people and situations (S.T. Fiske and S.E. Taylor, 1991). Only on rare occasions are people willing to spend extra time and effort in coming to an understanding of the social world.

Heuristics refers to experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning and discovery. Heuristics methods are used to speed up the process of finding a good enough solution, where an exhaustive search is impractical. Examples of this method include using a 'rule of thumb', an educated guess, an intuitive judgement, or common sense.

Heuristics are simple, efficient rules, hard-coded by evolutionary processes or learned, which have been proposed to explain how people make decisions, come to judgements, and solve problems, typically when facing complex problems or incomplete information. These rules work well under most circumstances, but in certain cases lead to systematic errors or cognitive biases.

14.3.5 Sources of Error

The different sources of error in social cognition are:

- **Negativity bias:** It means greater sensitivity to negative information than positive information.
- **Optimistic bias:** It means the tendency to expect things will turn out well overall.
- **Overconfidence barrier:** It refers to the tendency to believe our judgements are more accurate than is reasonable.
- **Planning fallacy:** It means the tendency to optimistically predict how long a task will take to complete.
- **Counterfactual thinking:** It refers to imagining other results than what actually transpired.
- **Thought suppression:** It refers to efforts to prevent certain thoughts from entering consciousness; it may increase sensitivity to these thoughts.

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Check Your Progress

1. What do you understand by the term, 'heuristics'?
2. State the premise of attribution theory.
3. Name the two theories related to the concept of impression management.
4. What is self-serving bias?

14.4 GROUPS: TYPE AND FORMATION

Group formation has certain objectives. The purpose behind group formation may be task achievement, problem-solving, proximity or other socio-psychological requirements. Group formation is based on activities, interactions and sentiments.

Task Accomplishment

The basic purpose of group formation is the achievement of certain objectives through task performance. Individuals come closer in order to understand the tasks and decide on the procedures of performance. In any organization, task accomplishment is the reason for which different groups such as an engineering group, marketing group, foreman's group and personnel group are formed for achievement of the organizations' goals. When an organization faces some procedural difficulties, concerned groups discuss them and evolve new techniques of production, marketing and other functions.

Problem Solving

When people foresee or face certain problems, they unite to solve the problems. Unity has strength. A group provides strength to members who are willing to challenge any problem. Group behaviour gives more strength to come down heavily on problems.

Proximity

People form groups because of proximity and attraction towards each other. The group formation theory is based on propinquity, which means that individuals affiliate because of spatial or geographical proximity. They interact frequently with each other on many topics, because this interactive communication is rewarding.

Socio-psychological Factors

Sentiments and action-uniformities bring people closer. They also form groups for safety, security and social achievements. People cooperate with members of the group on social as well as economic grounds to reach satisfactory levels.

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People form groups basically for activities, interaction and due to sentiments. People living in proximity frequently discuss their problems. They try to reduce their tensions and achieve satisfaction. Individuals interest each other only when they have common attitudes and sentiments. People with diverse attitudes form groups under certain compulsions to meet unexpected problems. Employees form unions to ensure the safety and security of jobs. Outside the factory, they form groups for religious, social, cultural and political activities.

Group Development Stages

Group development has been studied to find out the purposes behind development. Different groups require different lengths of time for development. The development structure is heavily influenced by the nature of groups. The various stages of group development are **forming, storming, norming, performing** and **adjourning**. All the groups may not accept the same order of group development.

The *first stage* is *forming*, wherein the group decides its own purpose, structure and leadership. Members decide what types of behaviour are acceptable. The membership is increased till the group is finally established. Individuals are brought together for the first time and a communication pattern is developed. The interdependence of members is decided as per the structure and goals of the group. They decide on plans of future action involving discussions on formulation of group goals and evaluating the resources for achieving the goals.

The *second stage* of group development is *storming*, wherein members storm their views. They put forth their views forcibly with strength, and this evidences interpersonal conflicts. Many problems are brought to the group for discussion and solution. Many conflicting views may be expressed. Authorities and supervisors are frequently criticized for various reasons. However, in an educated group, people consider the views of others with patience. They arrive at unanimous decisions with constructive attitudes. A group develops syntality and gets synergy if the storming stage is actively smoothened. On the contrary, the group will not advance if the members continue storming and conflicting with each other.

The *third stage* of group development is *norming*, wherein members develop a close relationship and demonstrate cohesiveness. Members enjoy belonging to the group and develop synergy. A strong sense of group identity and camaraderie is developed. The group structure is solidified, and interpersonal relationships are developed with increased cohesiveness and sharing of ideas. It increases the positive behaviour and strong feeling of development among members.

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The *fourth stage* is the *performing* stage. The group performs its functions to achieve the desired objectives. It is fully functional and operational. This stage is directed towards the accomplishment of group goals. It explores the action to be taken and decides on innovations. Satisfactory performances and achievement of group goals are observed under this stage.

The *fifth stage* is the *adjourning* stage of development when the group is dissolved. The adjournment stage is generally undertaken after completing the task, although the group may be adjourned even before completing the task, due to misunderstanding and storming. Mutual friendship is lost, depression is observed, and the group is wrapped up with activities. Such adjournment is undesirable for both individuals and the organization. The group objectives should be fulfilled before adjournment. Leaders play a great role in the continuation and adjournment of the group. Dynamic leaders always try to review and strengthen the group activities for the development of their people.

The group development stages are recycled for achieving fresh objectives. A change in leadership, membership drive, physical location and revitalizing the task recycles the group development stage from adjourning to forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The management tries to find out which stage the group is passing through and who is the leader for effective control and guidance of the group. For example, if the group is passing through the storming stage, the management cannot entrust the group with responsibilities, because the conflicting members cannot perform better. It has been revealed by research that the storming stage may not always be disturbing. In some cases, it becomes essential to arrive at common solutions.

Types of Groups

Groups are classified from various angles. The purpose of classification of groups is to understand their nature and function for effective management. Groups in this section are divided based on the place of existence and formation and development.

Groups Based on Place of Existence

Groups can be divided from the existence point of view. A group may be existing at the work place while other groups may exist at the living place. They have their respective purposes. Groups of family, friendship, functional, task and interest are discussed as per their existence.

***Family groups**:* A family group has a dominant impact on organizational behaviour. The composition and quality of family members decides the behavioural pattern. Educated family members are more responsible and respectful to the organization. On the contrary, illiterate members have no behavioural culture to practice in the organization. A family group is natural and informal and has a long-lasting impact on organizational behaviour.

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***Friendship groups*:** A friendship group has an informal impact. Friends of like mind gather together, enjoy themselves and communicate with each other. If they are motivated with their attitudes and sentiments, they perform better in an organization. Understanding of friendship groups becomes essential for effective motivation. Many problems are solved at the friendship level.

***Functional groups*:** Functional groups exist as per the nature of operation and function of the organization. This type of group is the outcome of specialties of structure and its functions. The relationship between the supervisor and his subordinates is strengthened under this group. Functional groups consisting of superiors and their subordinates have become common in industrial organizations. Their mutual understanding and relationship are deciding factors of behaviour. Interaction and interdependence of members is literally observed in functional groups.

***Task groups*:** Task groups or project groups represent those members of a group who work together to complete a task. A task group, unlike a functional group, is not confined only to a superior and his subordinates but extends beyond this to include the higher command authorities. The group is formed not between two cadres, but includes all the cadres, which are associated with the task performance. It is known as a project group because all the employees concerned the accomplishment and completion of the project are brought together. In a factory the production manager, maintenance manager, safety engineer, supervisor and workers are brought closer to complete the construction of the plant. A task or project group is a formal organization to achieve a particular objective. When the objects are achieved, the task group is dissolved.

***Interest groups*:** People with common interests form a group to serve their interests. Trade unions, labour groups and clubs are examples of interest groups. If the interests of any member of the group are affected, all the members resort to pressure tactics to serve his interests. For example, if any employee is punished, other employees go on strike to revoke the punishment of the employee. They may also pressurize the management towards a common interest to be served. Many employees in organizations resort to strikes to have higher pay scales, healthy working conditions and other benefits. These groups adopt ethical or non-ethical, legal or illegal practices to pressurize the management. As a result, many organizations face problems of labour- interest. Interest groups may be formal or informal, depending upon the nature of interest. Multiple unions are observed in Indian industries which have created obstacles to development on many occasions. The management has to be very cautious about the interests of such groups in order to avoid any rifts, confusion and conflicts. In society too, interest groups are founded for political, social, cultural and religious purposes.

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Groups Based on Formation and Development

People form groups on the basis of affiliation and attraction between them. The groups may be small or large, depending upon the reasons for formation and development. They may be primary and secondary groups, membership and reference groups, in and out groups and formal and informal groups.

Primary groups are formed on the basis of social characteristics and individual perceptions. Each person is able to communicate with others. A primary group is natural and has a spirit of comradeship, friendship and loyalty. The best example of a primary group is the family. Initially, primary groupism was confined to social groups, but later on it was extended to business and industrial organizations. Employees join together to arrive at a common platform for mutually achieving the objectives of an organization. Functional and task groups have been developed on the principles of primary groups.

Secondary groups are formed and developed with a formal structure, wherein one member is the leader and the others are followers. Committees, trade unions and other such groups come under secondary groups. A secondary group develops on the basis of the exchange theory. It assumes certain benefits to members, unlike a primary group where benefits are not primary objectives. Such kind of group is basically formed to satisfy social needs.

Membership groups actually assume membership of the group to which the members belong. This type of group is a formal group. It necessitates the following of certain rules and regulations of registration, collecting fees from members and formulating a charter of demands. It has a formal structure outlining specific roles and expected behaviour. The functions of the leader and followers are well defined.

A **reference group** is non-existent and informal. Employees try to be associated with this group, even though they are not attached directly to the group. For example, non-member employees of a trade union identity themselves as part of the trade union.

In groups are associations of similar-minded employees. They have a dominant place in society. In groups perform many social functions. They are highly cohesive groups and can contribute greatly to development. They can go against the organization too, when they take a negative stand.

Out groups are associations of dissimilar employees. They are looked upon as subordinates or lower cadre employees having lower values in society. They are low cohesive groups.

Formal groups have a formal structure and designated work assignment. The behaviour of employees is stipulated and directed towards goals. Formal groups have designated formal organizational structure, expected roles and behaviour. The roles of superiors and subordinates are well

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defined. Formal groups have formal functions and objectives. The activities of the group are guided by the leader and members. Educated members have constructive roles to play in achievement of the group goals. Trade unions, committee managements and other recognized associations of employees are real examples of formal groups. Trade unions in India have not played a very constructive role in socio-economic development. Recently, the unions have begun to realise their responsibilities and are attempting to develop their organizations.

A committee is a more useful formal group. The role of committees is increasing in organizations. It is considered to be one of the more important forms of organizational set up, as discussed in the first chapter. It is used for discussing focal points, different viewpoints and information. The number of committees depends on the nature and size of the organization. Significant viewpoints are exchanged to arrive at more useful decisions. On the contrary, no officer or authority is blamed for unpleasant and strong decisions, because a committee's decisions are not personal decisions. They reflect the overall views of the committee. Committees are given specified duties and authority. Task forces and functional groups are operational in management. Specialized jobs are assigned to expert committees for suggestions. Many organizations have formed permanent committees for separate functions, known as plural executive committees. In this case, decisions are taken by more than a single executive. The committee may either consist of employees from the same or different cadre of the organization, as the need may be.

Informal groups are associations of people who are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined. These groups are natural formations. They have a formal recognition and designated work. Informal groups are not formal groups which have a formal structure and organization. Formal groups prescribe goals and relationships, whereas informal groups do not have such prescriptions. Formal and informal groups coexist in any organization.

Informal groups are of different status, such as groups with leaders, primary group member status, and fringe status and out status. They have their specific roles to play in an organization. Informal groups have some norms which are followed by members. These norms become traditions of the group over a period of time. They have a specific role in the socio-economic development of people. Informal groups have been developed in Indian organizations for achieving social benefits. For example, informal groups of members of the same district, state, caste and creed have been formed to meet their mutual, social and cultural problems. They have been formed to celebrate social, religious and cultural functions. Informal groups have considerable functional and dysfunctional aspects of organization. Many organizations find informal groups highly constructive and useful. Informal groups are therefore, encouraged in all types of organizations.

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Check Your Progress

5. What are out groups?
6. How is task group different from functional group?
7. State the basis of group formation theory.

14.5 THEORIES OF GROUP FORMATION

A group exists for the satisfaction of individual needs separately as well as jointly. It may be the object of need or the group may simply be the means for satisfying some need. A group develops because the group members like it to develop for satisfying their varied needs. They want the group for attraction and maintenance. Interpersonal attraction, similarity, group activities and group goals are important factors for developing groups.

Interpersonal Attraction

There are certain variables which provide interpersonal attraction. The primary variables are attitude similarity, value congruence, personality characteristics and physical attributes. Environmental variables such as proximity, contact and interactions are also influencing factors of interpersonal attraction. Interpersonal attraction is influenced by proximity which indicates the physical distance between two individuals. Physical proximity influences personal affiliation. It influences the formation of a friendship. A personal relationship is determined by proximity. Propinquity and proximity are taken together to influence the people. Propinquity contributes to the group formation. Favourable attitudes help in the formation and development of a group. Proximity makes it possible for individuals to come into contact and interact with each other.

Contact is the situation in which individuals are likely to be in each other's presence. Increased opportunity provides increased interaction. Proximity and interaction provide the opportunity for individuals to learn about the characteristics of others. The main source of attraction between two individuals is physical attraction. Perception of beauty allures others to be attracted to each other. Heterogeneous and homogeneous attractions are visible differently in different people of varied age groups. Boys and girls below the age of twenty generally have homogeneous attraction whereas heterogeneous attraction is visible above the mentioned age. Physical attraction is a determinant of interpersonal interaction.

Similarity

Group development is feasible because of similarity in thought and actions of group members. An interaction is rewarding when two individuals are

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similar. Similarity in attitudes, beliefs and opinions are factors of personal association leading to group development. Similarity in attitudes has been a constant source of attraction. It has been used for interpersonal predictions. A liking towards similarity and dissimilarity makes persons come together and develop an association. Similarity of personality is also a determinant of attraction. The relation between perceived or assumed similarity and interpersonal attraction has a positive approach in group development. Similarly, economic similarity has been an important factor of attractiveness. Economic similarity has a high personal attractiveness. Similarities in race, sex and region have an influence on group development. Perceived ability is also used for personal attraction. The similarity decides the degree of personal attraction which is instrumental for group development.

Group Activities

Group activities make people enjoy and form groups for getting a permanent satisfaction. People join a group because they enjoy the company of other like-minded people. In any corporate sector, the employees continue to be members of the group till they enjoy the company of others. The group behaviour depends on the enjoyment of the members while they work in the group. It has been observed that group activities have been a source of encouragement to the members who develop group dynamics and force. The success of a group depends on the interested members. The strength of a group is possible only at the satisfaction of its group members while they perform group activities.

Group Goals

Group goals are utilised for the development of group functions. Path goals have been used to motivate employees. Individuals accept the goals and enjoy the activities. A person joins a group because he likes the goals of the group. Many people join charitable institutions because they like the mission of the group. Employees join an organization because they prefer the goals apart from earning a livelihood. If rivalry or friction exists in the group, members try to solve them to achieve group goals. Frustrated members are consoled by other members so that group activities continue to achieve goals. Members resolve the differences by reducing intergroup and intragroup conflicts. The common group goal can produce new group membership. People working together reduce their mutual stress by discussing the group goal. Employees are encouraged to achieve established goals of the group. Reinforcement functions are used to make employees interested in the group goals. Higher wages and job security are used to motivate the employees. The group goal has an external attachment. Many external factors mobilize the employees to work hard. The goals of the group have social recognition and preferences of autonomy. Since the group goals are also externally recognized, its members enjoy being there and working for the development of the group. People join

a group for satisfaction and also to meet certain need requirements. Persons who are rewarded for being members of a group are model examples to others to join the group. People having subdued needs also join the group because they expect to get those needs fulfilled in due course of time. Group goals become instrumental in satisfying the present and potential members. Individuals' goals are also satisfied while the group goals are achieved by them. Difficult tasks are also completed by joint efforts of the group members who enjoy working in the environment.

14.5.1 Group Decision-Making

Group decisions have more advantages than individual decisions because multiple alternatives are arrived at in group thinking. It becomes easy to select the best alternative out of several alternatives put forward by group members. The external pressure on individuals is avoided in group decisions. By aggregating the suggestions of many employees, the best suggestions are taken up. In a heterogeneous group, members bring in diverse views which help arrive at most useful decisions. Group decisions have more acceptability than individual decisions. Group decisions have the support of many individuals. They have a democratic base and are free from arbitrary decisions.

The disadvantages of group decisions are the time-consuming nature and ambiguous responsibility. A group takes more time to decide on even a simple problem. Group members pander to their egos when arriving at decisions. This creates disagreement and puts the organization at bay. In group decisions, some members waste time arguing on petty issues. It is observed that group decision-making is defective when the individual members are inefficient. Nevertheless, group decisions tend to be more accurate, creative and acceptable. There is a wide scope for getting more information and critical analysis.

Group decision-making techniques involve consideration of group think, group shift, brainstorming, the nominal group technique, Delphi technique and electronic meeting. These have been discussed in the following section.

Group think: Group think is related to norms which are overriding factors over a realistic approach. It relates to majority decisions, ignoring the view points of the minority and unpopular members. Group think is the final decision of the majority members of a group where the opinions of some members are suppressed. The suppressed opinions take a deadly turn after the decision has been taken. It creates disgruntlement amongst the minority, which may prove fatal to organizational activities. Group think therefore, should not be invited as otherwise it may work as a disease to hamper the progress of an organization. Many people after observing the majority opinion suppress

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their views in the group decision-making process and express the views of the majority members instead. This is a disease that attacks group members.

Many times, group think is symbolized as shyness because the group members feel too shy to express their views in a meeting. They express the views of the majority members because they face group pressures against their own opinions. Group think ignores realistic views because of group pressure. Many times, group members become violent and stress upon hearsay, ignoring the realistic views of others who do not want to raise any point because of their sober attitudes. Group think is a liability in a group decision-making process. Sometimes, group members become so enamoured of seeking concurrence that they override realistic appraisals of useful suggestions. Group think reduces the mental efficiency, reality and moral judgement of such people who are unable to express their views in group meetings. Group think is possible because of the dominant nature of some of the employees who prevent others from expressing their views.

Group shift: The decision is shifted from the major decision because the decision has been taken under an exaggerated position. When it is observed that a group decision is very conservative, it may be shifted and made more liberal. Differences are thereby avoided. Dissension is accepted and group decisions are finalized in that light. It provides more opportunities to members to participate in the decision-making process. If it becomes clear that the minority and less popular persons will be properly heard, they would contribute to the maximum, as they become bold and inspiring. The group leader motivates members to take an active part in the decision-making process.

Brainstorming: Brainstorming is an idea-generating process wherein any or all of the members of the group provide alternative solutions at the same time. The criticisms of these alternatives are also put forth at the meeting. The process of brain storming is initiated by the group leader who clearly presents the problems before the group. The group members understand the problems and any doubts are clarified by the group leader. Members are encouraged to suggest as many alternatives as possible. All of them are given a free hand to suggest any measures which may even be critical to the organization. Bizarre suggestions are also accepted until all the alternatives are screened and final decisions are arrived at after hearing all views. It does not prohibit any anti-suggestions. Even unpleasant suggestions are invited and critically examined by all the group members. Final decisions are taken by the entire group members with even dissenting members being given due regard so that well-balanced suggestions are arrived at in the group decision process.

Nominal group techniques: Nominal group techniques provide a systematic approach for problem solving to group members who are given sufficient chances to present their views independently, unlike brainstorming. Every member of the group independently writes his views and suggestions

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concerning the problem. They are not allowed to consult other members. Each member is then allowed to present his case before the other group members. He or she reads out his suggestions, giving his own ideas. All ideas are presented and recorded on board. A discussion takes place only when all ideas have been recorded. Every group member listens to the ideas carefully and ranks the ideas presented. The final decision is taken with the highest aggregating ranks. This method does not restrict independent thinking, unlike the interacting groups wherein outspoken people make more of an impression than the real thinkers.

Delphi technique: The Delphi technique is similar to that of the nominal group, except that the members are not required to be physically present. It does not allow group members to meet face to face. The problems are first identified and carefully examined by the group members. Questionnaires are framed which are independently filled up by each member. The outcomes of all questionnaires are transcribed at a place, reproduced and given to each member. The members carefully examine the solution and put forward their respective views. The process is repeated until a consensus is arrived at. The greatest advantage of this technique is that each member is given equal importance. No member can unduly influence another, because it does not require the physical presence of participants. Members at distant places can participate in this technique through postal and other means of communication. The disadvantage is that this is time-consuming. A prompt decision cannot be taken because of delays in communication and in administrating the technique.

Electronic meetings: Electronic meetings are similar to normal group technique, wherein sophisticated computer technology is used. Issues are presented to the participants, who type their results on to their computer screens. Individual views are presented on the computer screen. Participants freely take a decision, as they know others' reactions immediately by pressing a button. It is fast because people have to concentrate on the problem. It provides anonymity, honesty and speed. Electronic meetings have no problem of distances because of the existence of the latest communication techniques such as E-Mail, Internet and so on.

Group Cohesiveness

Group performance becomes effective where group cohesiveness is observed. Group cohesiveness is an atmosphere of closeness or common attitudes, behaviour and performance. There is common agreement on group views. Group members develop a cooperative spirit which is important for the successful completion of tasks. Members like each other. Psychologist, J Keyton has defined group cohesiveness as 'the degree to which members are attracted to one another and are motivated to stay in the group'. The frequencies of interaction, favourable evaluation and inter-group competition

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are increased under group cohesiveness. There are some specific factors which reduce cohesiveness, such as disagreements, group size, and unpleasant behaviour dominance by individuals and so on. Group members have to develop an atmosphere of group cohesiveness by adhering to the determinants of cohesiveness such as the time spent together, the group size, and the gender of members, external threats, previous success, group goal, and frequency of interaction, severity of initiation, favourable evaluation, personal attractiveness and inter-group competition.

Determinants of Group Cohesiveness

The main determinants of group cohesiveness are as follows:

- **Time spent:** The amount of time spent influences the cohesiveness. People spending more time together are likely to cooperate better than those who meet rarely. As people spend more time together, they become friendly. They get more chances of interaction which brings them together through talk, responses and gestures.
- **Common interaction:** It leads to the fulfillment of common interests and increased attraction. The time spent together depends on various factors such as physical and mental proximity. People who live together, travel by the same means of transport, work together and have similar mental attitudes come closer to each other. Many a time too much closeness reduces the cohesiveness because of mental differences. Physical closeness and mental likeness decide the amount of time spent together.
- **Group size:** The group cohesiveness decreases as the group size increases. A small group provides more opportunity of interaction than a larger group because members of smaller groups find more opportunities to understand each other. Larger groups create physical as well as mental distances. Many times people are neutral and apathetic to each other in a large group. As the group size increases, many cliques are developed. Many subgroups are developed within the large group, creating inter-conflicts and differences. If the group size starts increasing, it would be advisable to form a separate manageable group.
- **Gender of members:** In gender mixing, it has been traditionally accepted that females like to meet with females. They prefer to talk, walk and live together. They understand each other and extend helping hands to each other. Similarly, men are accustomed to working and joining together for entertainment and other functions. Sometimes, men and women form different groups. It has been observed that female workers develop more cohesiveness than the male workers. Women are less competitive and more cooperative. Greater group bonding is observed amongst female employees. However, recently certain

exceptions have been observed where men and women have started to form cohesive groups, but such phenomena are very rare and are not long lasting.

- **External threats**: External threats compel people to unite to prevent unpleasantness. People are always afraid of problems. If any problem is expected to incur and disturb the happiness of the group members, they would like to develop group cohesiveness. Unity gives strength. They can fight against threats and protect themselves. Trade unions become successful if they develop the ideas of protecting their group members. People develop feelings of security and safety by developing cohesiveness.
- **Previous success:** Success increases the spirit to work. People develop cohesiveness if they find that the cohesiveness has resulted in some success. Successful employees are less prone to differences and deviations as 'esprit de corps' lead to unity and strength. Many successful non-banking financial institutions in India have launched several production and marketing projects, as their successful experiences in one project are used in other projects.
- **Group goals:** Group goals lead to cohesiveness and common understanding. Sometimes, the cohesiveness is binding upon the members. Many a time, members accept voluntarily that working together will bring good results for the organization as well as for them. Successful goal accomplishment is essential for the development of the organization.
- **Frequency of interaction**: Frequent interaction increases group cohesiveness. Frequent interaction is possible through common meetings, conferences and other mutual functions. The members of a particular cadre and post get more chances of interaction and this helps to bring them together.
- **Severity of initiation**: Group cohesiveness is visible where people get entry in the group after some difficulty. The harder it is to enter the group, the more the cohesiveness. An easy entry into the group makes people cheap and unrealistic towards group cohesiveness. Common initiation also helps in creating cohesiveness.
- **Favourable evaluation**: Favourable evaluation leads to higher cohesiveness, as it elevates the prestige of the group members. It makes all the members proud of their performance and this motivates them to work hard with cohesiveness. The management has to be careful in evaluation, because even a slight criticism may discourage the group members and lessen the group cohesiveness.
- **Personal attractiveness:** Group cohesiveness increases when members are attracted to each other. It increases mutual trust and support. Mutual

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enjoyment and entertainment lead people to overcome problems, helping in personal growth and development. It assumes that people are not overzealous about each other, because zeal leads to unhealthy practices.

- **Intergroup competition:** Competition brings group members together. The competitive spirit leads to efforts which help each other to attain success in life. Decentralization creates an atmosphere of intragroup competition which requires group cohesiveness. Unlike intergroup competition, intragroup competition creates conflict and contradictions. Friction and fighting lessen cohesiveness. Favoring any one group member over another creates unhealthy competition and lessens cohesiveness.

Effects of cohesiveness

Cohesiveness is always desirable. It helps in effective achievement of the group goals. High performance is related to high cohesiveness, provided there are performance norms. The relationships amongst the group members have also been influential in achieving high performance. Therefore, high cohesiveness does not always have a good effect on performance. It has been observed that high cohesiveness is both a cause and consequence of high productivity. As has been discussed already, success brings about a cooperative spirit. Success motivates people to work hard. Productivity therefore helps develop cohesiveness, as cohesiveness enhances productivity. People in a group share their joys and sorrows, making each other happy while at work. Sportsmanship is observed in group functions. The basic point is that group members learn playful functions while working together. Cohesiveness assumes that no one in the group is given more importance or less importance. Group performance is because of the team spirit. 'People win together as well as lose together'. As has been pointed out already, performance based on cohesiveness is based on performance-related norms.

Check Your Progress

8. What are the various types of group decision-making techniques?
9. Name the determinants of group cohesiveness.
10. What is Delphi technique?

14.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Heuristics refers to experience-based techniques which are used for problem solving, learning and discovery.

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2. The premise of attribution theory is that we want to know the reasons for the actions that we and others take; we want to attribute causes to behaviours we see rather than assuming that these behaviours are random. This allows us to assume some feeling of control over our own behaviours and over situations.
3. The two theories related to the concept of impression management are Gestalt approach and cognitive algebra approach.
4. Self-serving bias is the tendency to attribute positive outcomes to internal causes and negative outcomes to external causes, leading to errors in attribution.
5. Out groups are associations of dissimilar employees. They are looked upon as subordinates or lower cadre employees having lower values in society. They are low cohesive groups.
6. A task group, unlike a functional group, is not confined only to a superior and his or her subordinates, but extends beyond this to include the higher command authorities. The group is formed not between two cadres, but includes all the cadres, which are associated with the task performance. On the other hand, a functional group exists as per the nature of operation and function of the organization.
7. People form groups because of proximity and attraction towards each other. The group formation theory is based on propinquity, which means that individuals affiliate because of spatial or geographical proximity.
8. The various types of group decision-making techniques group think, group shift, brainstorming, the nominal group technique, Delphi technique and electronic meeting.
9. The determinants of group cohesiveness are group size, and gender of members, external threats, previous success, group goal, and frequency of interaction, severity of initiation, favourable evaluation, personal attractiveness and inter-group competition.
10. The Delphi technique is similar to that of the nominal group, except that the members are not required to be physically present. It does not allow group members to meet face to face. The problems are first identified and carefully examined by the group members.

14.7 SUMMARY

- The process of communication involves the sending and receiving of messages through words as well as without words, while the outcome of communication (or the 'product') determines the meaning of verbal and non-verbal messages.

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- Non-verbal communication refers to the sending and receiving of wordless messages conveyed through such means as gestures, body movements, facial expressions, tones of voice, colours, spaces, and styles of dressing.
- Attribution theory is intended to help us understand the causes of human behaviour, be it our own or someone else's.
- The basis of attribution theory is that we want to know the reasons for the actions that we and others take; we want to attribute causes to behaviours we see rather than assuming that these behaviours are random.
- Attribution is our attempt to understand the causes behind others' behaviour on specific occasions.
- Kelley's theory of causal attributions proposes that in order to understand the 'why' about other person's behaviour.
- Kelley's theory suggests that attributions are made on the basis of internal and external causes.
- Attribution is not to be viewed as a very rational process following orderly cognitive steps. Several types of biases can creep into this process.
- Cognitive model indicates that self-serving bias stems from the way we process social information.
- Impression formation means the process by which singular pieces of information about another person are integrated to form a complete impression about the person.
- The concept of social cognition examines how individuals process, store, and applies information about other individuals and social situations.
- Heuristics refers to experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning and discovery.
- Heuristics are simple, efficient rules, hard-coded by evolutionary processes or learned, which have been proposed to explain how people make decisions, come to judgements, and solve problems, typically when facing complex problems or incomplete information.
- The purpose behind group formation may be task achievement, problem-solving, proximity or other socio-psychological requirements. Group formation is based on activities, interactions and sentiments.
- The basic purpose of group formation is the achievement of certain objectives through task performance.
- The group formation theory is based on propinquity, which means that individuals affiliate because of spatial or geographical proximity.

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- Sentiments and action-uniformities bring people closer. They also form groups for safety, security and social achievements.
- The various stages of group development are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.
- The purpose of classification of groups is to understand their nature and function for effective management.
- People form groups on the basis of affiliation and attraction between them. The groups may be small or large, depending upon the reasons for formation and development.
- A group develops because the group members like it to develop for satisfying their varied needs.
- Propinquity and proximity are taken together to influence the people. Propinquity contributes to the group formation.
- Group development is feasible because of similarity in thought and actions of group members.
- Group activities make people enjoy and form groups for getting a permanent satisfaction. People join a group because they enjoy the company of other like-minded people.
- Group goals are utilised for the development of group functions. Path goals have been used to motivate employees.
- Group decisions have more advantages than individual decisions because multiple alternatives are arrived at in group thinking.
- Group think is related to norms which are overriding factors over a realistic approach. It relates to majority decisions, ignoring the view points of the minority and unpopular members.
- Cohesiveness is always desirable. It helps in effective achievement of the group goals. High performance is related to high cohesiveness, provided there are performance norms.

14.8 KEY WORDS

- **Informal Groups:** It refers to a group that is formed on the basis of associations of people who are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined.
- **Non-Verbal Communication**: It refers to the sending and receiving of wordless messages conveyed through such means as gestures, body movements, and facial expressions, tones of voice, colours, spaces, and styles of dressing.
- **Primary Groups**: It refers to a group which is formed on the basis of social characteristics and individual perceptions.

- **Social Cognition:** It refers to a process which examines how individuals process, store, and applies information about other individuals and social situations.

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14.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the sources of error in social cognition?
2. Write a short note on non-verbal communication.
3. What are the principles to be considered while carrying out attribution?
4. State the basis of Gestalt approach of impression management.
5. What is the basic purpose of group formation?
6. Why is membership group considered as a formal group?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss Kelley's attribution theory.
2. Explain the errors of attribution process.
3. Anlayse the various group development stages.
4. Discuss the various types of groups.
5. Explain the theories related to the process of group formation.

14.10 FURTHER READINGS

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