

Block

1

SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

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MCFT-006 APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to the second year of M.Sc. (CFT) programme of study of IGNOU.

You will study 'Applied Social Psychology' as the first Course in the second year of this programme of study on Counselling and Family Therapy. It comprises both theory and supervised practicum components. The theory paper on this is MCFT-006 and supervised practicum is MCFTL-006. You have to complete and clear both these components separately. For theory paper MCFT-006, you will have continuous evaluation through an assignment and a term-end examination. For MCFTL-006 you have to work under the supervision of the academic counsellor allotted from the study centre you are attached with. In the end as per the details given in the Supervised Practicum Manual (Block 5), you have to submit your file to the study centre.

This Course is designed to make learners understand the various components of socio-cultural influences on the individuals. The Course provides comprehensive knowledge about society and positive psychology. This Course provides knowledge and understanding about the various cultural factors influencing individual, family and therapy.

The Course would help you develop the understanding that is required of counsellors/family therapists to have deeper knowledge about the client's socio-psychological life dynamics. The Course consists of four theory Blocks and one supervised practicum Block.

THE BLOCKS

Block 1 is on "Socio-Cultural Influences". This Block provides you indepth knowledge and understanding about culture and socialisation. Theoretical approaches of personality and adjustment have been discussed. The Block focuses on some important components like social cognition, prosocial behaviour and aggression. On studying this Block, you shall also be able to understand the influence of karma theory on individuals.

Block 2 is titled "Positive Psychology". This Block consists of four Units. This Block helps you understand the role that well-being plays in an individual's development. This Block also makes you aware about how to promote well-being. The Block further imparts knowledge about the significance and modalities of positive parenting. A study of this Block will help you to understand the concept of holistic well-being.

Block 3 is on "Interpersonal Relationships". This Block has four Units. These Units deal with the different issues related to interpersonal relationships. This Block will help you understand the importance of cohesiveness, adaptation, resilience and problem solving in relationships and provides detailed information about interpersonal communication. The interface between workplace and life

is also emphasized. On studying this Block, you shall be able to understand the interpersonal relationships and influences.

Block 4 is on “Human Sexuality and Couple Relationships” and it consists of five Units. It talks at length about sexuality and alternate sexuality. This Block deals with the importance of intimate relationships in life. The Block further explains the concepts of marital harmony, separation and divorce. Following the study of the Units of this Block, you will come to know that each and every relationship has its own importance and issues.

The Supervised Practicum Manual – Block 5

This Block will provide you the framework for hands on experiences. The supervised practicum has been planned with the applied aspect in mind. The Practical Manual provides you stepwise directions for doing the practical activities and recording observations and responses.

HOW WILL THIS COURSE HELP YOU?

The course will provide you a new vision for perceiving human development from socio-psychological perspectives.



BLOCK 1 SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Introduction

The Block1 “Socio-Cultural Influences” will acquaint you with the basic influences on human development in the society. The Block consists of five Units.

Unit 1 entitled “*Culture and Socialization*”, describes the role of culture and society on human development. Theoretical approaches to understand culture and socialization have been discussed. There is cultural variation in socialization and child rearing practices. The influences on socialisation in the Indian context have been highlighted.

Unit 2 is “*Personality and Adjustment*”. These terms are quite popular with the lay persons also. The basic issues which influence personality and adjustment have been outlined. The basic aspects of personlity have been described. Areas of adjustment and characteristics of adjustment are also discussed in the Unit. The Unit will help you to understand these concepts from the therapeutic viewpoint.

Unit 3 is on “*Social Cognition*”. The focus of this Unit is on social cognition among human beings. The domains and goals of social cognition have been described. Further, the Unit explains the role of schemas in social cognition. Modes of social thought and affect on social cognition are discussed.

Unit 4 is on “*Prosocial Behaviour and Aggression*”. The Unit begins with the meaning of these terms. Further it highlights the basic motives which influence prosocial behaviour. Personal and situational determinants of prosocial behaviour have been described at length. Theoretical understanding of aggression has been provided. Causes and management of aggression among individuals has also been discussed.

Unit 5, “*Karma Theory*”. explains the meaning and concept of karma. The meaning and role of karma in some religions has been discussed at length. After studying this Unit, you will be able to understand the influence of karma from various perspectives.

UNIT 1 CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION

Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Culture and Socialization: Basic Concepts
- 1.3 Theoretical Approaches to Understand Culture and Socialization
 - 1.3.1 Ecological Systems Theory
 - 1.3.2 Developmental Niche Framework
 - 1.3.3 Developmental-Contextual View
- 1.4 Cultural Variations in Socialization and Child-Rearing Practices
 - 1.4.1 Feeding, Sleeping, Weaning and Attachment
 - 1.4.2 Aggression, Schooling and Apprenticeship in Middle Childhood
 - 1.4.3 Puberty and Marriage
- 1.5 Features of Indian Socialization
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 1.8 Unit End Questions
- 1.9 Further Readings and References

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Think about your favourite festival or the last family occasion you attended. Most often, these occasions are engagements, marriages, births in the family, housewarming ceremonies, where we get together as a family, perform rituals together and have fun. What do these occasions signify? They represent a common understanding of customs and beliefs shared by social groups. Besides the most observable celebrations and customs related to special occasions, there are some mundane everyday practices that we follow in our daily life. Some of these practices are bathing before praying, praying at specific times of the day, touching the feet of elders in the family, feeding the cow, sharing a family meal, fasting, taking care of elderly parents, and many more. Have you ever thought about why we follow these practices?

This is because we are members of particular social groups. These social groups are categorizations formed on the basis of the region we belong to, the languages we speak, the religion we follow, and the castes we are born into. Every practice and custom conveys values, mores and mentalities that should be continued for survival of the social group, as well as to maintain societal harmony, in general. These practices and beliefs are derived from ancient traditions and include gender norms and rules related to marriage (caste endogamy, for example) as well. Belongingness to groups of our origin becomes an important marker of our social identity and group members have a tendency to protect and enhance their collective identity. How do we do this? We propagate the rituals, customs and everyday practices followed by our social groups by passing them on to the next generation. Transgressions (or breaking of rules, not following the socially endorsed norms) are viewed negatively and discouraged by most members of the group, especially those who are older and /or more powerful. This process, by which you become an effective member of your social group, is broadly referred to as socialization within a cultural context.

There are many cultures and social groups across the globe, which live in diverse ecological and environmental conditions. Depending on a variety of factors, including their socio-historic tradition, each group prioritizes some values, some behaviours and some practices, over others. This leads to immense cultural and ethnic diversity in the world. For example, in some parts of the world women veil themselves, whereas in other parts they don't. In some warrior tribes, learning to be aggressive is an essential part of growing up, while in other groups like the Buddhists, believing in non-violence and controlling aggression is the norm. This indicates that the socio-cultural practices and cultural goals and values underlying these, influence our development as human beings. This Unit will cover significant aspects related to socio-cultural influences on our development.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain basic concepts related to culture and socialization;
- Describe theoretical perspectives explaining the influences of culture and socialization on development;
- Discuss cultural variations in child rearing practices across infancy, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence; and
- Understand the unique features of socialization (including gender socialization) in the Indian context.

1.2 CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION: BASIC CONCEPTS

The Unit begins with an explanation about the concepts of culture and socialization and defines them. This is followed by an overview of different theoretical perspectives that provide a framework to understand culture and socialization. The main frameworks included in the Unit are ecological systems theory, developmental niche, and developmental-contextual framework. The last Section describes variations in socio-cultural practices from birth through adolescence, and the impact this has on the developing person. Apart from this, the ecological-contextual features which influence development will also be discussed. The Unit concludes with a summing up of major concepts.

Let us begin with what is the concept of culture and how is socialization as a process connected with it.

For centuries, a debate has ensued about how human beings are different from other species. When Charles Darwin's purported the idea of evolution as accumulated change over generations, it was met with immense speculation. Research thereafter focused on the evolutionary links to our behaviour and development. Frequent comparisons were made between human genetic make up and that of other species to find similarities and differences. We share up to 98% of our genetic make up with chimpanzees, however, there is still a great difference between apes and humans. What contributes to this difference? This missing link holds something which is characteristic of our species. Many scientists think this missing link is *culture*. Culture thus becomes the man-made part of the environment, which is created and changed by human beings. It includes language, beliefs, morals, art, laws, customs and everything else that makes us members of human

society and particular social groups within it. Cole & Cole (2001) define culture as, “the designs for living that are based on accumulated knowledge of a people, encoded in their language, and embodied in the physical artifacts, beliefs, values, customs and activities that have been passed down from one generation to the other” (pp. 36) . It is a complete whole, a package, which includes many aspects of our everyday living and even thinking. We *acquire* culture, though it is not a concrete entity. It is ever present and influences our mind and our development in innumerable ways. Many psychologists believe that culture is also transferred from one generation to the other, much like the process of transfer of genetic materials. This means, inspite of cultural diversity there are some common strands of development, or developmental pathways will still be evident. These are the universal aspects of human development. This means, although specific cultural practices, child rearing methods may vary, every culture has some common understanding of children’s growth and development. In every culture, adults take care of children to ensure their survival and development. As children grow older, their assimilation into the larger cultural group also becomes the responsibility of adults around the child. How does this happen?

This happens through a process called socialization. *Socialization* is a process through which children acquire the knowledge, values, and standards of a culture to become effective, functioning members of their society. Socialization begins from the time the child is born and includes every interaction the child has with others in her / his family and society. For example, through socialization children learn the ways of being in family and community – this includes their age-appropriate daily schedules, when to wake up, when to sleep, when to eat, how to eat, gender appropriate dressing, how to behave with others and much more. Socialization is a deliberate process. This means adults around the child deliberately introduce (and monitor) children to their cultural systems, in order to pass on cultural knowledge from one generation to the other. However, children do not passively absorb everything that parents and elders tell them. They also question and debate because they have their own personal goals. We must understand that human beings are capable of introspection, that is, we reflect on our behaviour and that of others and display intentionality. This means we have clear goals and intentions about what we want. We also understand or come to understand what others want from us. This constant process of reflexivity and intentionality makes us unique beings. We reflect our thoughts and motives to others through language and other complex behaviours. Thus, socialization as a process is *not* one way or unidirectional – from adults to children. Rather, it is a dynamic, bi-directional interaction between the parents (adults) and children. This means knowledge about the world is “co-constructed” by adults and children. Socialization is thus, a process which inherently also includes conflict, as goals of adults and children may not always be in agreement. This is how cultures change from within. Many practices become redundant with time and are hence discontinued. Contrarily, cultures are also very resilient to change because socialization practices are rigid, deliberate and slow to change. Many ancient rituals and practices are still followed (even if just symbolically) and this demonstrates cultural continuity. So what do we conclude after reading the above?

Cultures are dynamic: Cultures change due to internal and external factors, but cultural change is very slow and not always concretely observable. But, cumulatively (over a period of time), the changes are far more evident.

For example, our dressing styles have changed a lot in the last 30-40 years. Most urban women now wear a variety of clothes from sarees to salwaar-kameezes to trousers and skirts. Men too do not wear traditional clothes now, unless the occasion demands. This change did not come about overnight, suddenly, but was very gradual. The demands of the context play a crucial role for cultural change to occur. Many times, observable changes do not always signify changes in our thinking. We may wear many 'modern' or western clothes but our thinking about certain issues (like inter-caste marriage or gender equality, for example) may still remain conservative and orthodox in nature. So change in overt practices may be faster than change in our cultural mentalities. To explain this further, studies on acculturation show that immigrants from Asian countries consciously try to conserve cultural traits, habits and practices from their home culture even if they are living in another post-industrial culture of the western world (USA, UK, Canada). They try to mingle with the popular culture of the host country yet are very serious about preserving their own traditional practices and beliefs.

Socialization is a deliberate, conscious process: Socialization is a deliberate process of co-constructing cultural knowledge about the world around us. Parents and other adults around the child consciously monitor, guide and teach the child behaviours appropriate to their own cultural context. This means, socialization holds the key to cultural transfer. Parents and adults regulate their socializing behaviours so that their children comfortably 'fit in' with the rest in society. Parental goals, wishes and aspirations for their children mediate this process. Many Asian parents are known to use demanding parenting styles with their children because they want their children to perform well in academics and extra-curricular activities, much in keeping with what is culturally expected. At the same time, concerns for family honour and prestige in society are intertwined with the child's behaviour and performance, not just in school but in other spheres of social interaction also.

Parenting styles, a prominent feature of child socialization, develop on the basis of cultural norms for socializing children, parental goals as well as personality traits of parents. In many cultures, parents are not the only socializing agents for the child. Other kin, relatives, teachers, and sometimes even neighbours, play the role of important socializing agents for the child. This is especially true of the Indian child, growing up in close knit extended or joint families.

This brings us to the next section on theoretical frameworks to understand the influence of culture on development. Many theorists have given detailed models and frameworks, using which we can understand various child outcomes which are a result of specific socialization practices in different cultural contexts. These models are useful for a 'within culture' understanding of how socialization and child development takes place, as well as for comparison of the same across different cultures. For example, using any of the models given in the next section, you can understand how Indian parents socialize their children, with what goals and using what child rearing practices. At the same time, you can use the model to compare Indian and American parenting / socialization practices (or that of any other culture), if you have observed (and have data from) both cultures. These models or frameworks have emerged from extensive research and also lead to more research in the thriving field of cultural and cross-cultural psychology.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Explain the concept of culture.

.....

.....

.....

2. What is socialization?

.....

.....

.....

1.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTAND CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION

There is no single broad theoretical perspective that unifies the entire body of relevant scientific knowledge on human development. Instead, human development is understood and approached from several theoretical perspectives. These perspectives can be grouped into four frameworks that answer the central questions of development. All the perspectives talk about the relative role of nature or biology (genes, DNA, trait transfer) and nurture or environment (psycho-social environment, nutrition, contextual factors) and their influence on development. The biological-maturation framework gives prominence to biology and explains development as endogenous (or from within the individual organism). The environmental-learning framework considers development as a product of exogenous factors (outside the individual, in the environments) and thus gives more importance to learning and factors that affect learning like reinforcement, rewards and training. The constructivist framework gives equal importance to the person and the environment and states that both play equal and reciprocal role in development. The fourth framework, which is of relevance to this Unit, is called the culture-context framework. Let us understand it in detail.

In the 1950s, anthropologists John and Beatrice Whiting, began a study on differences in family practices and child development across the world. This study was popularly known as the Six Cultures Study, as it was conducted in six communities from India, Mexico, Philippines, Japan, USA, and Kenya. The chosen societies differed in social complexity, dominant economic activities, cultural belief systems, and domestic living arrangements. In every culture, child behaviour was viewed as an index of the child's personality while adult behaviour, beliefs and values were indices of adult personality. These were measured systematically across six cultures. This study brought forth different child rearing practices and demystified many popularly-held notions about children. After the study it was realized that ecology, economics, social and political organizations set the parameters of behaviour of the agents of the childrearing (mothers, in most cases). Psychologists realized that theoretical concepts stemming from the

industrialized, western world could not be ‘universalized’ so easily. Child rearing practices were thus regarded as arising out of and designed to carry forward the culture of adults.

With more cross-cultural research, the significance of cultural influences on child development became established and the culture-contextual framework developed. Psychologists who work within the cultural-context framework agree that biological and experiential factors have reciprocal roles to play in development, and like the constructivists, believe that children construct their own development through active engagement with the world. But they differ from the other theorists by asserting a “third force” – *culture* – as part of the mixture. According to the cultural-context view, nature and nurture do not interact directly. Rather, they interact indirectly, through the powerful and ever-present force of culture.

The cultural-context framework considers both, children and their caretakers to be active agents in the process of development. Thus, from the culture-context perspective, human development is an outcome of a process of co-constructing beliefs and ideas about the cultural world. Importantly, it does not look for stage-like consistency in abilities and behaviour which most other theories and perspectives in developmental psychology do, like Piaget’s stages of cognitive development. Rather, the framework anticipates wide variability in individual performance as the person moves from one kind of activity to another due to the cultural and historical circumstances in which the child is situated. Thus, the culture-context framework is open to the idea of even non-existence of particular stages of development.

The framework offers new insights into understanding the interactions between culture and development, which move beyond the confines of only nature and nurture. The acceptance of this framework in mainstream developmental psychology has led to more cross-cultural sensitivity and culture-inclusive advances in the field. The next frameworks also emanate largely from an understanding that cultures and contexts shape development through socialization processes. Now let us take a closer look at the other frameworks / perspectives.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the four frameworks that explain human development?

.....

2. Which cultures were included in the Six Cultures Study?

.....

1.3.1 Ecological Systems Theory

The importance of viewing behaviour within its social setting was first recognized by sociologists who stressed the importance of individual’s subjective view. One of the most important contributions to these ideas

of individual in a society is the ecological systems approach by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). The ecological framework allows us to understand the connection between culture and development. The ecology of human development as defined by Bronfenbrenner, sees an individual not as a passive and static entity on which the environment exerts great influence, but as a dynamic and evolving being that interacts with, and thereby restructures, the many environments with which it comes into contact. These interactions between individual and environment are viewed as bi-directional and reciprocal. For example, while a child's development is being influenced by parents, family, school, and peers, the child is also influencing and molding the behaviour of others. The ecology of the child is represented in the form of concentric circles each fitting into the other depending to its influence on the developing child. You have read this theory in Block 1 of Course 1. Here, we will highlight the salients once again.

The microsystem represents the interaction between the child and her immediate environment (e.g. family, school) and resulting behaviour such as dependence, independence and co-operation and competition. The individuals in the microsystem engage in face to face interactions e.g. in child's home, at church/temple/mosque/gurdwara, school, hospital, day care.

Mesosystem, the second level, comprises linkages between two or more settings containing the developing person. This is a system made up to two or more microsystems, for e.g. home and school, day care and school, family and peer group. It is the mesosystem that links or ties together information, knowledge and attitudes from one setting that help shape behaviour order in another setting. For instance, if parents emphasize the importance of learning at home, and the preschool teacher provides stimulating activities at school then it motivates a child to learn more.

Exosystem, the third layer, influences the child's development in a significant way, even if the child is not a part of it. Parents' place of work or the community health center and welfare institutions like hospitals are considered part of the exosystem. For example, the child is not an active participant in the parents' workplace, but policies in the workplace like restrictions on leave and long, inflexible working hours (for parents) may influence the child's development negatively. Similarly, if the workplace accommodates allowances for childcare, or crèche facilities or paternity leave, the exosystem can positively influence the child's development.

The fourth and the outermost layer, macrosystem, is the most complex ecological system. It encompasses the other systems and consists of customs and values important for child's culture. The larger political, economic, administrative, social system formulates the macrosystem. The entire societal structure is part of the macrosystem, which holds within itself, other systems and influences them. An example of the macrosystem could be the legal system in a culture, which incorporates and responds to the cultural fabric of that society. With reference to India, our legal systems include provisions for different religious groups like the Hindu Marriage Act or the Muslim Law. These are in response to a secular society which believes in equality before law in spite of religious diversity. Similarly, welfare provisions for child care are in accordance with ideal perceptions about family life and the role of women in society.

An important feature of the ecological systems is the time factor. In a revised version of the theory, Bronfennbrenner added another system, the

chronosystem, which accounted for the time factor or temporality of development. He believed that the study of development-in-context is incomplete if it does not include observations at two (or more) different points of time in the life span.

While the ecological framework explains contextual influences on development, the question may arise ‘How does this happen and how can we better understand the specific processes that take place?’ The developmental niche provides a framework for understanding how various aspects of culture guide the process of development. By using this framework, it is possible to see how the cultural environments of particular children are organized — to see how the culture is presented to the child at any particular time.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Who gave the ecological systems theory?

.....

2. What are the five ecological systems?

.....

1.3.2 The Developmental Niche

The term *niche* is borrowed from biological ecology, where it is used to describe the combination of features of the environment a particular animal or a species, inhabits. This is explained by using the example of a pigeon and a robin, both of which might live in the same part of a forest. But the birds create a distinct niche for themselves based on exactly where they build their nests and from what materials, and the kind of food they seek. This shows that although the larger environment is shared, its experience for each differs considerably.

Theorists Charles Super and Sara Harkness gave the developmental niche framework. According to them, at the center of the developmental niche, is a particular child, of a certain age and sex, with certain temperamental and psychological dispositions. By virtue of these and other characteristics, this child will inhabit a different cultural world than the worlds inhabited by the other members of his/her family. This world will change as the child grows and changes.

There are three major components or aspects of a culture that constitute the developmental niche and shape development. The first component is the **physical and social setting** of everyday life. It includes the size of the family, the living space, area of residence, number of siblings in the family, size of the family, type of family, type of occupation of the family and other features. For example, in rural Kenya, mothers often have eight or more children, making family size very large. As the income generating

activities of these Kenyan mothers are home based, the baby is likely to have several playmates and caretakers who are siblings. By contrast, in the southern part of Holland, many people live in a small geographic area, where houses are very compact and the living room serves as the children's playroom. Typically, if there is a baby in the house, there will be a play pen in the house, where he or she can play independently with toys in close proximity to other members of the family. Eating and sleeping schedules are important aspects of the physical and social setting. For example, in many North American and European homes there are three meals a day at specified times versus the five to six small meals at unscheduled times customary in many Asian cultures.

The second component of the developmental niche focuses on **culturally regulated customs and childrearing practices**. Many aspects of the children's environment are organized by customary practices. The use of older siblings as caretakers in rural Kenya, for example, is customary. There are special terms for these child nurses in the native Kenyan language, and they are expected to care for their younger siblings in a special way that is different from mother's care. Likewise, the use of playpens in Holland is customary; it is commonly accepted as a solution for the problem of keeping the baby safe and happy in their living environment. Sleeping and feeding arrangements for infants also tend to follow customary patterns. For example in rural Kenya, although the next to youngest child continues to sleep with its mother and the other siblings after the birth of the younger child, it no longer sleeps at the mother's front but rather at her back. This change, along with termination of breast feeding and back carrying, results in a fundamental shift in the child's physical and social setting of life. Customs of care are a source of support for parents and other caretakers because they provide readymade solutions to issues of developing children, from how to protect children from hazards in the environment to how to ensure that they are adequately educated for their future roles in society.

The third component of the developmental niche is the **psychology of the caretakers**. Parents' cultural belief systems and related emotions underlie the customs of child rearing and validate the organization of physical and social settings of life for children. In cultures where babies and young children customarily sleep close to their parents, for example, parents often feel that to put the child elsewhere, amounts to neglect. On the contrary, among the American middle class families where babies are often put to bed in their own separate rooms, practices geared to teaching the baby to sleep through the night and quiet itself upon waking are understood as part of training the child to be independent, a culturally important attribute throughout life.

Within the niche, these three components influence each other. Parents do not easily leave their children in settings which they judge to be dangerous. The customs of child care are generally adapted to the particular physical and social settings, as well as to what are symbolically acceptable to the caregiver. The various aspects of the larger human ecology differentially influence the three components of the niche. The customs carry a particular weight of history and are a conservative force such that, other things being equal, many parents will, rear their children with many of the same traditions they grew up with. Economic and demographic changes may rapidly affect the settings of daily life for children. In an urban environment, with an increase in dual earner families, children may spend their day with fewer

brothers and sisters, or probably in a day care center. The psychology of the caretaker may be directly influenced by shifting ideals at the national or community level about the nature of children and their needs. That is, the changes in the larger society can influence the child, through the components of the niche.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Who gave the concept of a developmental niche?

.....

2. What are the components of a developmental niche?

.....

1.6.3 Developmental-Contextual View

The most recent view explaining socio-cultural influences is the developmental contextual view given by Richard Lerner. Lerner gives a model of developmental contextualism in which two concepts are important. **‘Goodness-of-fit’** means the right match between the child’s innate, biological attributes and the social environment, including the relationship with parents. So if there is a good fit between the child’s attributes, abilities and parental expectations, the child will thrive and there will be positive developmental outcomes. On the other hand, a poor fit will lead to more conflicts and discord between the child and others, resulting into negative developmental outcomes. To assess the goodness of fit, all the important systems in the context where the child participates are taken into account. These include the family, school, the neighbourhood and other contexts. Another important concept is that of **plasticity** – the ever present malleability of the individual. This means we are constantly open to change and innately ready to adapt to newer situations. The influence of the socio-cultural context and external factors test the limits of our plasticity. Plasticity also indicates that early and effective interventions can change the developmental pathway for better and that it is never too late! Processes of adaptation to challenges in the environment are used to understand plasticity in individuals. Lerner has used this framework mainly to understand positive youth development in a variety of contexts.

Based on the understanding of these theoretical frameworks, when we study human development and understand childhood as a developmental stage, we must focus on:

1. **Local contexts and cultural meanings** that organize the lives of parents and children in particular settings. For example, the lives of children and their parents living in villages of India are organized around farming, taking care of animals and doing household chores. In the village context, caste boundaries are very important, children may grow up in large, extended or joint families and family relationships are very

close knit. The same is not true of children growing up in middle class families of urban India. The child lives in a smaller family; the houses are well built, modern but smaller and there are fewer family members living under one roof. Similarly, because a child grows up in a nuclear family care giving is mostly the parents' responsibility. If the parents are both employed, one may need to employ others to take care of children. In both conditions, development needs to be understood with reference to the cultural context and meanings children and parents associate with specific relationships, objects and events around them.

2. ***Social relationships*** in which children survive, develop and learn. Children who grow up in large, extended families may be cared for by many people of the household. They may thus form close relationships not just with their parents but also with other family members like aunts, uncles and grand parents. In case of a child brought up only by parents, they are the child's only source of attachment and security. If the child is spending a good amount of time at the day care or with the professional child care provider, the relationships she will form with that person will also become significant.
3. ***Everyday activities*** of children that promote physical development, language and learning. Children who go to schools participate in many school activities and then spend time at home on either school related activities like doing homework or playing with friends. Many children will also be involved in doing structured extra-curricular activities (or pursue hobbies) like going to learn painting or singing. The everyday activities of children who drop out of school or those who have never gone to school are very different like working in the house, taking care of younger siblings, earning or helping out the parents in the farms or other occupations. For these children, playing and working are thus a merged activity which happens simultaneously and not separately. By involvement in such activities, these children learn other skills and competencies like taking care of younger children, cooking, cleaning or pottery, carpentry and the like.
4. ***Outcomes*** of health, competence and culture specific ideals of behaviour. Children who are breast fed for longer durations without supplementary nutrition show poor health by the time they are in preschool. Children who are immunized and well fed show better health prospects. The ideals or expectations of appropriate behaviours from children also emerge out of the local context and culture in which a child grows up. A child who has grown up in a joint family or an interdependent community will have a clearer understanding of authority and cooperation. Similarly, children from urban families are expected to be more independent and alert because parents may not be constantly present with them. Similarly, there could be larger cultural expectations like maintaining harmony or openly showing aggression, which could be encouraged or discouraged across different communities.
5. ***Interaction of the environment with children's developing capacity*** to produce outcomes, normal or otherwise. Clean, open spaces and encouraging psychological environments in the home interact with the child's growing need to run or jump and feel secure. This child will be able to explore the opportunities around her/his to enhance physical development. On the other hand, children living in over crowded and unhygienic or highly polluted areas may not have these advantages.

Similarly, if the child's home environment is very stressful or the parents too dense are not very encouraging, the child may have lesser opportunities to enhance her/his overall development.

Let us now turn our attention to variations in child rearing practices across the world by way of specific examples and understand its impact on development.

1.4 CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN SOCIALIZATION AND CHILD REARING PRACTICES

Social practices common in our own culture make us assume that they are the only way things can possibly be done. But, comparisons across cultures make us aware of variations in social practices across the globe. Most research about children and their development took place in the developed nations of Europe, North America, Canada and other western countries. All theories of child / human development were also developed in these places and were true for people residing in these areas. Until recently, no one paid much attention to huge number of children who were born and growing up in under developed or developing areas of the world like Asia and Africa. In comparison to the development of children in the western, more developed regions of the world, we know very little about the development of children in the developing, also poorer areas of the world. The conditions in which children grow up in Europe or North America are very different from the conditions in which children grow up in rural Africa or Asia. This shapes their development differently. Some of these stark differences are:

Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Emphasis on Formal Schooling	Apprenticeship in the family or community for learning economic skills
Childhood as a distinct phase	Childhood as a stage with adult-like responsibilities and work
Standards of conduct that emphasize autonomy, independence & achievement orientations	Standards of conduct that emphasize social harmony, interdependence, achievement is understood collectively
Nutritious / abundant diet, monolingual or bilingual learning	Scarcity of food, uneven distribution of resources, multilingualism
Expression of emotions – self focused	Emphasis on expression and repression of emotions – context focused

Now let us focus on some cultural variations occurring during the course of childhood in children from different parts of the world. The information given below is a result of many years of research that has taken place in these societies. The practices of child care vary from culture to culture and the developmental outcomes are also different. This section presents select examples to bring forth variations in child rearing practices.

1.4.1 Feeding, Sleeping, Weaning and Attachment

Sleeping Patterns: Neonatal Period

By fifteen days of birth, the combined sleep of American babies is an average of eight and half hours. Most of these babies show marked shifts in sleeping

in the first week of life. The adaptation or adjustment to day and night sleep is natural to people living in urban, industrialized world. Some differences in this adjustment can be attributed to culture. Let us examine some differences in this adjustment in various cultures.

Kipsigis of Kenya, Africa: In rural Kenya babies are almost all the time on the mother's body, tied and carried to work. During the day time, the babies will sleep when they can while the mother carries out her routine tasks like farming, household chores or social activities. During the night, they sleep near the mother's body and are breast fed when they wake up. On an average, the overall day time sleep reported by rural Kenyan mothers for their one month babies was only 3 hours (at a stretch). Many smaller naps or periods of sleep were distributed across the day. With the passage of time, Kenyan babies adapt to longer sleeping hours at night. Thus, adaptation to longer sleeping hours at night for Kenyan babies happens much later in life than American or other babies of the urban, industrialized world. The influence of these early experiences can be seen in adult life of Kenyans as well. Kenyan adults are more flexible with their sleeping and awake hours than Americans.

Breast Feeding

Although babies across the world are nursed, there are many variations in the way nursing behaviours are organized. The activity of nursing or breastfeeding is organized around the sucking reflexes of the child and the way in which parents respond to these behaviours and the social interaction that begins. These initial sucking reflexes later turn into organized feeding. Some cultures put the babies to the mother's breast soon after birth. Alternately, others will bottle feed till the mother's milk starts flowing. Babies are also given to wet nurses who have better milk flow than the mother, till the mother's milk starts flowing. The way in which nursing is handled will have a direct effect on the child's early experiences and indirectly influence later experiences also. Let us see how this happens. If the baby is bottle fed until the mother's milk flows, she/he has adjusted her/his sucking reflexes to bottle feeds, this will interfere with subsequent breast feeding when the mother is ready. If the baby cannot adjust to breast feeding (after bottle feeding), breast feeding may be given up altogether. This outcome will change the kind of milk that the child gets (mother's milk vs. other/milk from other sources) as well as the social interactions that will take place between the child and the mother (body contact, talking to baby while feeding, eye contact and child / mother's involvement in the activity). Similarly, if the mother believes that milk from other sources are more nutritious than her own milk, she may herself decide to give the child bottle feeds, but by being with the child. This will then not have a differential impact on the social relationships between the mother and the child.

Weaning

It is found that the process of weaning (which means removal from breast and use of liquid or semi solid diet for infants) starts very early in some cultures. Within India, the class differences are also responsible for these differences, for example, in the middle and higher class, weaning starts at about 4 months while in the lower class it is observed that infants are breast-fed as late as one year. In cases where weaning is early, it is accompanied by appropriate complementary feeding. However, in many rural areas the child faces the threat of malnutrition because breast feeding continues for

a longer period of time, while complementary nutrition does not begin. This has a huge impact on the growing child's health.

1.4.2 Aggression, Schooling and Apprenticeship in Middle Childhood

Aggression

The form and extent to which aggression is exhibited depends on many factors including gender and culture. Researches generally show boys in most cultures exhibit more aggression than girls reflecting sex role socialization and cultural rules regarding expression of aggressive behaviours. Cross-cultural differences in the amount of aggressive behaviours would be observed depending on the societal acceptance of aggression. For example, the Semai of Central Malaya raise their children to be non-violent and do not use physical punishment. With this kind of socialization, children seldom witness aggressive behaviour and have no aggressive behaviour to imitate. On the other hand, the Yanomamo of the Amazon region of Brazil and Venezuela are often described in anthropological literature as the "most fierce and violent people in the world". In Yanomamo society, aggressiveness is the major determinant of status within the group, and learning the aggressive ways of the society begins at an early age.

In Indian society, for example, many warrior caste groups like the Rajputs, value bravery and valour, and socialize children accordingly.

Schooling vs. apprenticeship

Until the late 20th century (last 100 years or so), majority of children across the world did not attend school. They were involved in economic tasks and domestic activities in their homes. Many were involved in infant or sibling care, and played in multiple aged children's groups. Even after western styled schooling was introduced in many countries, these patterns have not completely disappeared. It was believed that children who do not go to schools or drop out early, lag behind in many cognitive competencies and do not reach the highest stage of cognitive functioning (formal operations). However, research on everyday cognition with non-schooled children shows these children display immense social competence and can perform complicated cognitive tasks in their real-world contexts. The same children, however, could not perform well on text-bookish and abstract problems which were far removed from their everyday context.

These differences were attributed to a great extent on the learning styles of schooled and non schooled children. Non-schooled children typically learn through apprenticeship or hands on training from a more skilled adult, mostly a parent, elder sibling or adult relative. They learn by doing and are given more complex tasks when they master the previous, simpler levels. School based learning, as we all know, is abstract, theoretical and hardly ever experiential. Thus, both systems enhance different cognitive and social abilities in children. To hold any one as a norm would be erroneous.

1.4.3 Puberty and Marriage

Puberty

Cultural variations are observed in the way the onset of puberty is received. For example, in south India the onset of puberty is celebrated through ceremonies or distribution of sweets in order to announce that the girl is now ready for marriage and reproduction. On the other hand, in western countries, such celebrations are not considered as markers of reproductive age and marriage.

Marriage takes many forms in cultures around the world. For example, one would find societies where polygamy (one man is married to more than one woman) is practiced in contrast to the usual pattern of monogamy in which one man is married to one woman.

After these examples, let us briefly look at the features of socialization in the Indian context. Socialization in the Indian context is segregated by gender differences with different modes of socialization used for girls and boys.

1.5 FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIALIZATION

The features of socialization in the contemporary Indian context are slightly different from the focus of socialization practiced in the traditional times. This is because India has undergone tremendous social and economic changes in the last decade or so due to the combined forces of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Indian society is hence at the flux of tradition and modernity. This leads to many microlevel changes which show their presence in family socialization practices. Let us look at some of the changes from traditional times to the contemporary times.

In traditional times, birth of a boy was celebrated with much pomp and show whereas that of the girl was not welcome. Beliefs about girls being temporary guests in their parents' home were reinforced right from the time of her birth. With age, the girl is gradually initiated into taking up responsibilities for household chores, taking care of the younger siblings, and looking after the needs of the family members. More often than not, concerns for her safety and protection of her chastity restrict her mobility and reduce her chances of going to school for an education. As she grows into a young girl and reaches puberty, she is ready for marriage. Generally following the caste system, the girl would not be married in the same village. So after marriage the girl moves to a village far from her parents' village. She may be able to visit her parents' residence once in a year just for few days. Post-marriage, although she may feel lonely in the beginning, her goal becomes to assimilate with her new family (for which she has been trained and socialized since the early years). The birth of children, especially boys brings a new status for her within the family, now that she has provided them with a male heir. As she gains authority in the household with her increasing responsibility, her status in the family improves. Finally as her son grows older and she becomes the mother-in-law she enjoys complete power in the family in terms of decisions related to the daily household functioning.

The case of boys was slightly different. They enjoyed higher status right from the time of birth as the male heir in the family. During the early years, the boys spent lot of time among other women folk of the family and enjoyed the undivided attention from the mother. The mother-son bond is very important in the Indian context as much of the mother's social status is derived from her ability to produce sons. In the school years, the boys moved out of the protected household domain and disciplining them became the responsibility of the father and other male relatives. Under the father's harsh tutelage and strict discipline, the boy was expected to perform and prepare himself for the roles of the family leader and provider in future. In the traditional Indian family, adherence to the family norms, conformity to the family ties or kinship ties and considering the interest of the family and its members first was of utmost importance.

Against this gendered backdrop of traditional socialization, let us take a look at the changes that have occurred in contemporary times, leading to some changes in socialization processes.

With increasing emphasis on girls' education, some gender roles have changed, but larger gender stereotypes remain strong in society. With education, employment of girls in the organized sector has also increased, especially in the urban areas. Thus girls now train for a variety of future roles, including the traditional roles, which are not changing as rapidly as the other factors. Now there are less restrictions on the mobility of girls, leading to more exposure to opportunities for progress in society. With reference to marriage, although it still remains a coveted goal of adult life, the age of marriage has increased for both boys and girls, giving them more time to explore their identities. There is more freedom and accommodation of personal choice in the partner selection process now than ever before.

Preparation for dealing with newer societal challenges has led to changes in the strategies of socialization for girls and boys in the Indian context.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you have come across many examples that open your eyes to cultural variations in the human experience. These have been explained from the point of view of socialization for cultural continuity and their combined influence on the developing person. Contemporary frameworks to understand research and theory related to socio-cultural influences have also been discussed. Just like you are a product, producer and representative of your culture, it is important for you to understand other individuals as products of their own cultures and thus avoid an ethnocentric bias (my culture is the best). This approach will take you a step closer to appreciate cultural diversity in an objective manner and not judge others' behaviours against the norms of your own culture. This approach will also help you further in research and designing culture-sensitive applications / interventions based on theoretical concepts to a variety contexts.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Culture is the man - made part of the environment, which is created and changed by human beings. It includes language, beliefs, morals, art, laws, customs and everything else that makes us members of human society and particular social groups within it.
2. Socialization is a process through which children acquire the knowledge, values, and standards of a culture to become effective, functioning members of their society.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. The four frameworks to understand human development are 1) Biological-maturation 2) Environmental-learning 3) Constructivist 4) Culture-contextual.
2. The six cultures included in the study were Kenya, USA, Mexico, Japan, India and the Philippines. They were chosen due to differences in social complexity, dominant economic activities, cultural belief systems, and domestic living arrangements.

1. Urie Bronfenbrenner gave the ecological systems theory.
2. The five systems of the ecological systems theory are: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

1. Charles Super and Sara Harkness gave the concept of a developmental niche. They applied concepts from the ecological sciences to explain socialization and developmental processes in human societies.
2. The three components of the developmental niche are 1) physical and social settings 2) culturally regulated customs and child rearing practices and 3) psychology of the care giver.

1.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. How do the components of the developmental niche interact with each other?
2. What are the differences observed in children who grow up in the developed world and the developing world?
3. Why is it of value to study children across cultures? What should we observe while studying children across cultures?
4. Observe any two child rearing practices for boys and girls in your cultural context and discuss their significance for child socialization in the past (traditional relevance) and now. You may speak to experienced adults like parents or grandparents in this regard.
5. Compare and contrast any two frameworks explaining culture and socialization.

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UNIT 2 PERSONALITY AND ADJUSTMENT

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning and Definitions
- 2.3 Basic Issues
 - 2.3.1 Unconscious/Conscious Influences
 - 2.3.2 Self and Uniqueness
 - 2.3.3 Gender
 - 2.3.4 Situational Influences
 - 2.3.5 Cultural Influences
- 2.4 Basic Aspects of Personality
 - 2.4.1 Psychoanalytic Perspective
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 - 2.4.7 Humanistic and Existentialism Perspective
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- 2.5 Comprehensive View on Personality
- 2.6 Adjustment
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- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Glossary
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 2.10 Unit End Questions
- 2.11 Further Readings and References

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Anita commented her classmate Sudha had a warm personality. Her teacher had poor adjustment at home and was always scolding them.

Rumaha and her friends were discussing about a new classmate Zaheen in the tutorial classes. Amina said Zaheen seemed so well mannered and has adjusted well with them while Nazira has past two years not adjusted with the group and is always snooty and has rowdy personality.

Terms like what we just read and other words like “What a hot personality”, “How adjusting”, “What a cold personality”, etc. are common terms heard

on various TV shows and in day-to-day conversation. In this Unit, we will try to understand what the terms personality and adjustment mean. Studying personality and adjustment is essential for counsellors and family therapists. We need to have an insight to help our client in a better way.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:-

- Define personality and adjustment;
- Appreciate personality theories and implications of the same for therapy;
- Differentiate basic aspects of personality;
- Understand various theories of personality;
- Explain fundamentals of adjustment;
- Discuss misdirected adjustment;
- Delineate areas of adjustment; and
- Appreciate factors which contribute towards adjustment.

2.2 MEANING AND DEFINITIONS

Personality and adjustment are terms which are commonly used in our daily conversations with our family members and friends, all being lay persons. The term personality is derived from the word ‘persona’ meaning ‘the aspects of a person’s character that they show to other people. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000 defines personality as the various aspects of a person’s character that combine to make them different from other people.

Mischel (1976) defines personality as follows: “personality usually refers to the distinctive patterns of behaviour (including thoughts and emotions) that characterize each individual’s adaptation to the situations of his or her life” (p. 2). These adaptations to the unique life circumstances result in one’s adjustment to the same. Personality refers to the various enduring and distinctive patterns of behaviours and thought that are characteristic of a particular person (Morgan et. al., 1979).

Further, Morgan et. al. (1979) define adjustment as a judgement heuristic in which subjective probability estimates start at a certain point and are raised or lowered depending on the circumstances.

Every individual has a unique personality which consists of stable patterns of behaviours, thoughts, emotions and feelings. For successful adaptation of an individual, adjustment to one’s physical, socio-cultural, and psychological environment is a must. As you have studied in Course 2 of this programme, various mental health issues develop as a result of maladjustment and incapability of the personality of an individual to adapt to a given situation. In this Unit, we will not highlight these mental health disorders but, instead, would concentrate on the notions and fundamentals of personality and adjustment. We will first start our discussion with what constitutes a personality, and in later sections, deal with adjustment.

2.3 BASIC ISSUES

To analyse deeper into the issues of personality and adjustment, one needs to give due cognizance to some basic issues which impact personality and adjustment.

2.3.1 Unconscious/Conscious Influences

You are aware that there are two main forces — unconscious and conscious which influence human behaviour and action. The role of unconsciousness in human behaviour cannot be underplayed, though at the same time the extent of its influence needs to be understood and determined.

2.3.2 Self and Uniqueness

What constitutes 'self'? Who am 'I'? What is 'me' made of? 'Is the self derived of chemical substances or biological drives or spiritual elements?', are some of the critical questions which need to be addressed in the study of personality.

In the study of child development, we commonly say that each child/human is unique by itself. So can one general theory of personality apply to all?

2.3.3 Gender

Differences among men and women have existed from time immemorial. Acceptance of these differences has now taken place in scientific terms too! Now, the question arises—'Why are men aggressive and women so expressive?, Why women who are more nurturant and adjusting still are comparatively more depressed?' 'Why are men ruthless and want to over power everyone around them?' Such are a few of the questions which are raised in the discussion on personality and adjustment.

2.3.4 Situational Influences

How will an individual react in a given situation? Will the behaviour of all individuals in a given situation be the same or will it vary? An outgoing girl can act shy in front of a prospective groom. Is behaviour specific or influenced by situations? An honest individual is most of the time honest in his/her dealings with varied home and work place situations. Is behaviour and action person-specific?

2.3.5 Cultural Influences

Is personality innate or is it influenced by culture? Are we born with specific temperament and character? Can society or culture influence one's personality? What is the relation between nature-nurture/heredity-environment? Is all or part of personality fixed or dynamic? These are some of the questions which need to be considered.

2.4 BASIC ASPECTS OF PERSONALITY

In this Section we will consider various theories of personality which have been found important by various researchers and writers. All these perspectives together would constitute the study of personality. Remember personality is more complex and yet to be uncovered and completely understood, than what is explained below.

Psychoanalytic perspective of personality is based on the work of Sigmund Freud. In Course MCFT-001, Block 1, you have read in detail about Freud's theory. You have studied Freud's theory in substantial details covering topics like psychic structure, conscious and unconscious, psychosexual stages, defense mechanisms, and limitations and applications of Freud's theory. You should read this theory again to understand the topic being discussed here.

Freud did a lot of analysis of dreams to interpret and understand the unconscious. According to him, the unconscious is revealed in the hidden unsexual dreams which a person has but which have sexual motivation hidden. According to him, there are two levels of content — manifest content and latent content, to any dream or psychological experience. The manifest content is what the person remembers; it is conscious in content while the latent content has an underlying hidden meaning. Hence, all the psychological tests which are based on conscious replies, self reports, etc. analyse manifest content. The unconscious is manifested in symbols of a dream and helps to analyse latent content (Friedman & Schustack, 2009).

You had read about the structure of mind — id, ego, super ego; and the principles on which it works. The sexual energy or libido and its manifestations into psychosexual development of a person – oral stage; anal stage; phallic stage (Oedipus complex, penis envy; latency period; and genital stage. The differences between male and female on personality development which are quite evident, were discussed by Freud in the terms of 'lacking penis'. This has also been discussed earlier. Defense mechanisms are the processes by which ego distorts reality to protect itself in order to reduce and resolve anxiety. You have already studied about repression, identification, projection, displacement, reaction formation, rationalisation and regression as types of defense mechanisms. Here we will discuss a few which had not been covered earlier. These are:

Denial : Denial is a common defense mechanism in which the person does not acknowledge anxiety provoking stimuli. (Baimeister, Dale & Sommer, 1998). In this defense mechanism, the persons deny or refuse to believe the occurrence of an event which causes pain.

Sublimation : Sublimation is the means to turn sexual energy away from sexual ends and towards societal goals (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). It is transforming of sexual energy/dangerous urges into positive, socially acceptable motivations (Loewald, 1988).

A major contribution of Freud to the study of personality has been that he revolutionized psychology with his emphasis on sexuality as a prime element of personality. He further emphasized importance of early childhood experiences on adult personality; free associations and the unconscious mind, the understanding of inner drives and conflicts of humans. Psycho analytic approach seems to be pessimistic in nature and emphasis on the pathology is more (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). The impact of psychoanalytic perspective in studying and understanding personality cannot be underplayed; though, the acceptance of the same and the emphasis on sexuality and id has reduced to some extent in the present times.

2.4.2 Neo-Analytic/Ego Perspective

Neo-analytic and ego aspects of personality emphasize on identity. Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Erik Erikson and many others have worked on this key aspect of personality, that is, identity. In Course 1, Block 1, you have read about Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, Carl Jung's theory of psychodynamics, Alfred Adler's theory of individual psychology, Karen Horney's contribution and Sudhir Kakar's Psychoanalytic theory. Please read them again to understand the personality from the identity perspective. Here, we will not repeat these theories but discuss their contribution towards identity as a part of personality.

Identity and having an identity crisis are common terms these days. Neo-analytic approach shifted from the sexuality perspective of psychoanalytic perspective. Jung emphasized on existence of universal archetypes [emotional symbols]. Jung divided the psyche or mind into three parts: the conscious ego, personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. He discussed the *animus* [male side of a woman] and the *anima* [female side of a man]. He discussed persona archetype persons means mask in latin and shadow archetype. The personality which we hold in front of others which can be seen, is persona archetype while the part of the personality hidden from others; which cannot be seen is shadow archetype and both are present in one's personality.

He also emphasized on mother archetype containing generativity, fertility good and evil. He talked of hero archetype (good forces) and demon archetype (evil force) being part of the personality. He had belief in collective unconscious and archetypes. He also discussed complexes, functions and attitudes. He gave extroversion and introversion attitudes. Carl G. Jung was the first person to use word association test to understand complex personality. According to him, the person has to answer with the first word that comes to the mind. The response, time taken to reply, number of words used to reply, any odd response, would lead to some theme. And, this theme would help to understand the root cause of the problem.

Alfred Adler emphasized on the inferiority complex and superiority complex. According to Adler, man's drive was to attain superiority in life. The emphasis in his theory is on aggressive drive, organ inferiority and its link with individual reactions, femininity as inferiority and masculinity as superiority. The drive among people to achieve perfection was called perfection striving. Adler emphasized on the rank or role of birth order and the significance attached to the first-born children. Adler described personality types based on the community interest and usefulness of the person; termed as *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* in German, meaning community feeling and it is based on the activity level of an individual. These are of four types: ruling dominant (high activity, low social interest), getting-leaning (low activity, low social interest); avoiding (low activity, very low social interest); and, socially useful (high activity and high social interest). Adler emphasized great importance to society, community and social situations. Adler further emphasized personality to be positive and goal-oriented nature of human beings.

Karen Horney's emphasis was on culture and feminism. She emphasized on individuality and importance of self realization. She rejected Freud's penis envy and innate sexuality and came up with womb envy. She postulated child's basic anxiety was being left alone, helplessness and insecurity. To cope with basic anxiety, individuals develop passive style, aggressive style or withdrawn style. Good child rearing was emphasized. According to Horney, self was of different types – real self (the inner core of personality perceived about ourselves); despised self (the perceptions of inferiority & helplessness; a result of parental neglect); and ideal self (the perfectionist image which one hopes to achieve). These types she identified through her study on neurosis. Horney gave coping strategies used by neurotics to cope with other people – moving toward people, moving against people and moving away from people.

Many others such as Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler, Anna Freud, Heinz Hartmann, Heniz Kohut also emphasized on culture, and development of identity. Erik Erikson described identity formation across the life span and the resultant identity crisis at each stage. Erikson emphasized on the attainment of social norms successfully to develop an identity and for resolving crisis. He did not stress upon innate sexuality. His emphasis was on ego. Here we will not go to details of the various identity formation and ego crises across the human life span, as you have already studied the same.

The role of neo-analytic and ego perspectives in the study of personality cannot be negated at all. With multiple roles a person plays today, the complexity of human personality has increased. Emphasis on both personal and social identity and merger of the two among an individual portrays combination of persona and shadow, animus and anima, negotiation of complexes, exploration of culture, identity and ego crisis at each life stage, and a search for a meaningful life by a person.

2.4.3 Biological Perspective

Biological aspects of personality are the main contender for emphasis on the role of heredity or nature on the human beings. In Block 1 of Course 1 you have read about the controversy of nature vs. nurture. In this sub-section we will understand the perspective from the personality's point of view.

Human beings, as we all know, have evolved from animals. Charles Darwin (1859) was the first person to emphasize this by finding similarity of human species with chimpanzees and apes. Darwin emphasized that each individual is different and this differentiation helps the individual to survive and reproduce, called natural selection. Darwin emphasizes on specific qualities which lead to survival and natural selection but which are these qualities, has not been pointed out. Individual differences do exist and some are due to the genetic reasons. Darwin's theory has also been called evolutionary personality theory (Buss, 2003; Simpson & Kenrick, 1997). We all also know that genes can affect development this also you have studied in substantial detail.

Genes also affect human temperament. Temperament refers to the stable individual differences in emotional reactivity. For instance, some babies cry a lot while others smile. Person's activity, emotionality, sociability, aggressiveness impulsivity are all characterized by the individual's

temperament. Eysenck developed a model of nervous system temperament. He gave a biological based personality theory. He dealt in detail with extroversion and introversion and its link to the central nervous system. He postulated that extroverts have a relatively low level of brain arousal and so they seek stimulations while introverts have a higher level of central nervous system arousal so they shy away from stimulating social environments (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). He also said that neurotic people have a reactive nervous system, which leads to emotional instability. This has also not yet been validated (Gale, 1983). Eysenck (1990) himself said that it is difficult to test a nervous system-based theory of temperament.

Personality has also been linked to the brain hemispheres. Human brain has two parts – right brain and left brain. It is believed that the left anterior hemisphere plays a key role in positive emotion and activation of the right anterior hemisphere plays a key role in negative emotion (Glick, 1985).

Twin studies have served as a source and material for personality studies. Twins reared together generally are provided with equal stimulation in terms of cultural inputs, dress, clothing and rearing of the twins is quite similar. Twins reared apart are of great interest to personality studies.

Monozygotic twins and dizygotic twins when compared with other siblings would show more resemblances and among monozygotic twins resemblance would be much more. We are not emphasizing nature over nurture; rather we are trying to understand the role of genetics or biology in human personality. The influence of shared and non-shared environmental stimulations has also to be considered while understanding the influence of biology on personality. The incidence of schizophrenia among especially twins is said to be quite high. A correlation exists even if the twins are raised in different families (Gottesman, 1991; Gottesman & Moldin, 1998).

Further, issues of homosexuality or heterosexuality also come under the purview of personality and its linkages to biological aspects. Genetic influences for homosexuality have been suggested and at the same time environmental influences on this also impact personality (Bailey, Dunne & Martin, 2000). Homosexuality may be a result of genetics or may have nothing to do with genetics but may be influenced by environment and other socially oriented experiences. Temperament is also said to be affected by pre-natal influences on the foetus. The impact of teratogens on the pregnant mother is well known.

There is a belief that looks reveal personality. Ernst Kretschmer (1934) started systematically studying this topic. He associated physique and mental disorders with his study on patients. Later, W.H. Sheldon elaborated this idea on normal people (Sheldon & Stevens, 1942). Sheldon's somatotypology differentiates three body types. These are mesomorphs – muscular, large boned, athletic; ectomorphs – slender, bookworm types; and endomorphs – healthy, fat, good-natured types. Research has still to find evidence for this. Although importance of genetic inheritance and genetic determinism cannot be ignored, but at the same time, prejudices should not be developed based on this and the strong role of culture and social environment in influencing one's temperament and personality cannot be forgotten.

2.4.4 Behaviourist Perspective

The learning and behaviourist theories also explain personality. Please recall the behaviourist approaches or learning theories studied in Block 1 of Course 1.

Pavlov's classical conditioning described conditioning of a response to a stimulus, generalization of the conditioning, discrimination between stimulus and extinction of response and its resultant importance on humans. Our likes and dislikes have been formed as a result of behaviour patterns conditioned by the society.

Occurrence of conditioning of neurotic behaviour is explained by the stimulus to which an individual does not want to react. Wolpe and Plaud (1997) said that neuroticism may be a conditioned response, fostered by an environment that requires the individual to discriminate between events under conditions in which judgement is almost impossible. Skinner propounded operant conditioning. He also had ideas of changing behaviour by providing appropriate stimulus on time. You have also read about social learning theory in Block 1 of Course 1. In treatment of substance and drug abuse, the focus is on modification of behaviour and providing reinforcement. Miller and Dollard (1941) said that there is a hierarchy of likelihood of a specific response to a specific situation and called it as habit hierarchy. It is the habit of a smoker to smoke in the morning, after half hour of eating, while sitting with friends, holding the cigarette in a specific way, so the change of this behaviour has to have an impact on the habit hierarchy developed by the addict.

Dollard and Miller explained the internal conflicts of an individual which lead to neurotic and obsessive compulsive behaviours. They found conflicts to be of three types:- approach-avoidance conflict (individual is both drawn to and away from the desired object, leading to anxiety and neurotic behaviour); approach-approach conflict (individual is drawn towards two equally attracting objects); and avoidance-avoidance conflict (individual is repulsed by two equally undesirable objects) (Friedman & Schustack, 2009).

Frustration and aggression are also a result of drive conflict among the individuals. Parenting, child rearing, use of behaviour techniques like shaping; time-out, etc. are a result of understanding the influence of learning on human personality.

2.4.5 Cognitive Perspective

You also read about cognitive theories in Block 1 of Course 1 of which Bandura's social-cognitive theory is quite relevant here. The other theories of cognitive perspective which influence personality will be discussed underneath.

We begin by understanding the Gestalt psychology. Gestalt is a German word meaning pattern or configuration. The central tenant of this theory is that symbols related to each other are kept away from each other and when looked with perception would lend to some shape or meaning. Then comes the Kurt Lewin's Field Theory. He emphasized on life space. Life space constitutes all internal and external forces which act on an individual. According

to Lewin, personality was the momentary condition of the individual (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). Field dependence as cognitive style variable of personality was discussed by Kurt Lewin. People can be field dependent or field independent. Being field dependent means that problem solving and behaviour is influenced by the field or content in which the problem occurred.

Then you have read in detail about Piaget's scheme and theory of cognition and its influences on our perception and action. Now, we come to an important theory — personal construct theory propounded by George Kelly.

Kelly's theory of personal constructs or constructivism arose from his observation that people tended to have the symptoms they had read about or had seen in other people (Kelly, 1955). He gave the concept of constructive alternativism meaning that humans change their thought processes and interpretation of events also can keep changing. Behaviour can be changed without any pre-warning and, thus, can't be pre-determined.

Kelly presumed that each of us is a scientist, attempts to predict and control events (Ryckman, 2000). All of us have our own theories of human behaviour. So to function effectively we understand what one needs to change about our constructs or concepts. Constructs are personal and different people use different labels to express the same behaviour. These are: core constructs (constructs highly important to individuals and very resistant to change) and peripheral constructs (easy to change). Kelly proposed that constructs could be characterized as pre-emptive construct (includes only its own elements, like black and white); constellatory construct (elements can be members of others but membership is fixed); and propositional construct (elements can be open to be members of others also). Constructs could be both verbal as well as non-verbal constructs (Ryckman, 2000).

Social cognition explains the social intelligence — mastery of socially relevant skills relevant to interpersonal situations and emotional intelligence—mastery of emotional ability to deal with others (Friedman & Schustack, 2009). With it comes forth the optimistic and pessimistic attitudes of personality. This clubbed together is called explanatory style meaning a person's habitual way of interpreting their life events. Some people learn to express learned helplessness (Martin Seligman, 1975). Seligman coined this term to explain all the situations in which an individual was helpless and could not stop punishment leading to learned behaviour of being helpless even in situations where punishment was avoidable.

Julian Rotter gave focus on locus of control approach which could be both internal (belief that individual's own action determines outcome) and external (forces outside individual's control determine outcome).

Then you have read about Bandura's modelling theory and observational learning in Block 1 of Course 1. Aggressiveness, self-regulation may be explained by this approach. Human cognition has direct impact on human personality.

2.4.6 Trait Perspective

Allport and Cattell's perspective are key theories of trait aspect of personality. Allport (1937) defined trait as “a generalized and focalized neuropsychic

system (peculiar to the individual) with the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent and to initiate and guide consistent (equivalent) forms of adaptive and expressive behaviour”.

Allport characterized traits as central traits (traits that are central to a person) and secondary traits (traits that are peripheral to the person). Allport further characterized traits as common traits (generally classifying people on a particular dimension) and personal dispositions (unique characteristics of the person) (Allport, 1961). According to Allport (1955), personality development centres on self's development or proprium (peculiarly our's) and goes through various stages. During infancy bodily self is salient. The use of body – bones, muscles, etc. is important. Bodily self forms the core of self. Then self identity develops around 18 months of age. During second and third years of age self esteem develops. Around 4 to 6 years of age self extension occurs. Self image, developing around the same time, according to Allport, also contains learned expectations of the roles we are required to enact and aspirations for the future. Between 6 to 12 years of age the self develops as a rational-coper. At 13 years or during adolescence, propiate striving of the self starts. Propiate striving is like development of conscience. During adulthood the self develops as self-as-knower. Self or proprium is able to create a unified whole (Ryckman, 2000). Allport believed that mature adults have functional autonomy. Functional autonomy means being mature, not dependent on others, participate in activities beyond self, warmly relate to others, have self-acceptance, realistic perception of reality, insight into their abilities and weaknesses, have a unifying philosophy of life and religion to help build a unified philosophy of life.

Cattell developed structure based systems theory of personality. He developed the commonly used 16 PF test. He believed that personality consists of multiple factors. Cattell defined traits as relatively permanent and broad reaction tendencies that serve as the building blocks of personality. Traits could be ability traits, temperament traits and dynamic traits (depending on person's motivation and interest). Cattell (1950) said that traits could be surface traits (traits that 'go-together' in many different individuals and circumstances) and source traits (the factor that brings variation in surface traits).

Now-a-days the *Big Five Model* is much emphasized upon. It is a five traits approach to personality. The five traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness.

According to Eysenck (1994), there are three factors to personality. These are extroversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Extroversion is the outgoingness and assertiveness, neuroticism includes emotional instability and apprehensions; and psychoticism includes psychopathology; cruelty and impulsiveness (Friedman & Schustack 2009).

2.4.7 Humanistic and Existentialism Perspective

Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Erich Fromm are major theorists who focus on humanistic aspects of personality. You have read these theories in Block 1 of Course 1. Please re-read them. Humanistic perspective is part of philosophy concerned with human existence. One's view to be in the world

is affected by one's relation in the larger world. Humanism is also a part of philosophy which is concerned with human values and its worthiness. It focuses on ethics and human soul. The focus is to realize one's full human potential. Self realization, happiness introspection for well-being leads to positive forces of life now called positive psychology. Seligman & Crikshentmcihalyi (2000) said that positive psychology is more concerned with creativity, hope, wisdom and spirituality and less concerned with aggression, weakness and pathology.

David Myers (2000) termed today's society as a phenomenon called American paradox, meaning that we have material abundance but also have social recession and psychological depression. There is increase in suicide rates, divorce rates, depression, conflicts, aggression, low tolerance, high frustration, violence, etc. in today's high-tech modern society. Myers and others recommended that altruism, fidelity family, community and spirituality would lead to fulfillment (Friedman & Schustack, 2009).

2.4.8 Social Interactionist Perspective

Harry Stack Sullivan, Henry Murray and Walter Mischel are famous theorists who advocated person-situation interactionist aspects of personality. Of this, you have read Sullivan's perspective in the Course 1 of Block 1. You should again read it keeping this perspective in mind.

Henry Murray (1938) defined personality as the branch of psychology which concerns with human lives, factors that influence life course and investigates individual differences. He called his theory as a personological system. He emphasized on the environmental press or push of the system which leads to action.

He emphasized social roles, situational determinants of needs of an individual, and a combination of presses and needs called 'thema'. He used thematic apperception test to measure them. Murray used narrative approach to study personality.

This perspective gives power to situations under which a person reacts or acts. A thorough study or bibliography would show consistency in behaviour across situations. Whether the person acted in individualistic or collectivistic perspective would also depend upon one's cultural influences and heritages. Interactions and emotional issues are closely linked together.

May (1967) emphasized on existentialism-analytic position to personality. He emphasized that human dilemma arises out of man's capacity to experience himself both as subject and object at the same time. The disintegration of values in the modern society has resulted in all problems for the human society. The feelings of self-worthlessness, loss of dignity, belief in the efficacy of reason in solving problems, individualistic and narcissistic aspirations rather than social and humanitarian have caused cynical approach to life (May, 1991, 1953).

Now, the task of therapy in this case is to help make abandoned and lonely people feel more aware of themselves and their potentials.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note : a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided below.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. Delineate the basic perspectives in the study of personality.

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2. Define trait.

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2.5 COMPREHENSIVE VIEW ON PERSONALITY

In the above discussions we found eight aspects or perspectives on personality. Would any one of the perspectives be enough to define personality? No, not possible. All perspectives have to be combined together to understand personality keeping in view the basic issues in mind. Cultural influences on personality development has to be given due cognizance. Detailed narratives or biographies of a person are required to understand the formation and life course of one's personality. Study of personality of a person helps to overcome health issues in the person. Neuroticism or non-adjustment to real life situations has been discussed through examining various aspects of personality. You have studied mental health issues in the second course of your study and now should be able to appreciate the importance of healthy personality and influence of personality on well-being and adjustment.

2.6 ADJUSTMENT

For an individual to be well-adjusted, the person must have self-awareness, other-awareness and problem-awareness. Religion and philosophy of life is said to help a person be more adjusting towards the life situations. Early experiences in the family help to formulate notions of life and adjustment.

Both motivation and frustration are two most important forces which decide whether the person at a given time is satisfied and, thereby, adjusted. Let us now discuss areas of adjustment.

2.6.1 Areas of Adjustment

During a life course, there are various areas of adjustment for a person and any malfunctioning in any of these areas could lead to non-adjustment resulting in neurosis or psychoses. Person generally uses various defense mechanisms to reduce anxiety and at the same time to be better adjusted to the life

situations. Please recall all the defense mechanisms taught earlier and appreciate their significance in adjustment of the person in day-to-day problems and situations which evoke anxiety. In course 2, MCFT-002 you have studied in detail about the mental health issues which are resultant of mal-adjustment of the individuals. Therefore, here we will not describe neuroses and psychoses. But one should remember that mis-directed adjustment could lead to such problems.

Now, let us focus on the various areas of adjustment:-

1. *Interpersonal relationships:* Interpersonal relationships are all the important dyad relationships which a person comes across from birth, such as parent-child, sibling, adult-child. Such relationships lead to social expectations in a person leading to a specific role behaviour. If reciprocal gratification of such expectations is present, group or family shows more acceptance.
2. *Family adjustment:* Family adjustment includes marital adjustment between husband and wife and also the parent-child adjustment. Couple gets together to build a productive life together. Reproduction, protection and care of their young children is primary task for the couple. They spend their primary time of life in caring, socialising, education of their child and are left with little time on hands for selves and their spouse, especially in India. The non-reciprocation of the love and care by the youngsters towards the elderly parents leads to adjustment problems and family crises. Also, now-a days divorce among the couples is on rise due to maladjustment between the couples. The contradictions between expectations and reality has led to many divorces in the country.
3. *School adjustment:* The child has to adjust to the outer world also. The peer group and school teachers both need to be taken into consideration while talking of school adjustment. During young years the child looks for teacher's acceptance and warmth and as the child grows into adolescence, peer acceptance and show of expressions becomes more important. Many a times peer pressures lead to mal-adjusted behaviour among the youngsters like drug addiction, smoking, drinking, truancy, etc.
4. *Sexual adjustment:* Sexual adjustment in terms of interpersonal issues in selecting mate, personal needs and sex in marriage are of consideration. Acceptance of one's sexuality is also of prime concern. And, resultant acceptance of one's proclaimed sexuality by people related to the person and the society also helps in better adjustment of the person.
5. *Career adjustment:* Making the right career choice is tough. The right education and skills learning leads to a job. Work place satisfaction may or may not be present. It depends upon socio-economic considerations, interests, abilities, aptitudes, job-requirement, attitude towards work place, etc. The impact of working under a female boss has been seen to cause stress to some men. Can a woman work? There exists an intermix of societal dictates and life-style related to working especially with regard to women. Such decisions also influence the person's approach to job. The delicate intricacies between the desired career choice and the option available for job also affects adjustment. Job satisfaction is closely related to personal adjustment.

6. *Old age adjustment:* Adjustment issues during old age need to be highlighted as during this age there are physiological changes in the body which may at times lead to adjustment problems. People who could not save the money and are not supported by their children are worst affected during old age. In any case, the money is reduced and there are financial hardships after retirement. In India, the individualistic culture has grown in the youth today, and with the breakdown of joint families the care and protection of the elderly has been reduced. This has left old people to feel isolated and useless. All such situations lead to adjustment problems during old age.

2.6.2 Characteristics of Adjustment

Lehner and Kube gave the following areas which formulate characteristics of adjustment:-

- *Developing a sense of individuality or ego identity:* A well adjusted person would be able to conform to the society as well as decide when not to conform, in a healthy way.
- *Developing a sense of independence:* A well adjusted person would be self-reliant and at the same time take protection when required.
- *Developing a sense of confidence:* A well adjusted person would be confident and be able to trust others, which is largely reinforced by a warm and trusting environment.
- *Developing acceptance of self and others:* A well adjusted individual will be able to accept oneself, like oneself, have confidence in one's abilities and at the same time like others and appreciate others, be able to love others and receive love or satisfaction that comes forth with it.
- *Developing a sense of security:* A well adjusted individual will be able to feel secure, follow and accept the right path.
- *Developing a sense of responsibility:* A well adjusted person would be responsible in their behaviour and actions. Responsibility could be towards people we are close to, as well as towards people we are working for.
- *Developing a goal-orientation and sense of direction:* A well adjusted person develops some goal or aim of life and chooses a path to achieve the goal. By finding a goal, the person is able to utilize their potentials. During the course of goal attainment, frustrations and limitations to achieve would also arise, but a well adjusted person would be able to overcome such frustrations and irritations on strive on for goal attainment.
- *Developing a sense of time perspective:* Our present is made of past and future. If one dwells too much on one's past, it would lead to mal-adjustment as the present would be wasted, whether it is the 'good old days' or 'the shame and guilt for past experiences' both would waste the present as well as the future, as that future will be present and then past! A well adjusted person utilises the past experiences as a guide for present and future action.
- *Developing personal values and philosophy of life:* A well adjusted person develops personal values, ethics and mores which are of societal acceptance. Subjectivity on values was considered and George

W. Hartmann (1941) gave the following as inclusion criteria for values:

- Inclusiveness: Value is for all rather than a few
- Permanence
- Irrevocability
- Congruency
- Cognitive completeness: It is based on complete information
- Survival: Value giving of human life or race

As one does value adjustments, a philosophy of life is created. A well adjustment person would have a philosophy of life.

- *Developing a problem-solving attitude:* A well-adjusted person develops an attitude which helps to solve problems in their own life and in the life of others. On the other hand, a neurotic person fails to identify, analyse and solve their problems. To be able to objectively see ourselves, to analyse and solve problems helps in better adjustment. Understanding cause and effect relationship and creatively using our resources to solve problems leads to a well adjusted person.

2.6.3 Achieving Adjustment

Adjustment could be achieved by making proper use of time. Constructively spending leisure time, time on self, time on others and time at workplace should be judiciously decided.

Individual differences among human beings need to be appreciated. Any adjustment technique formulated has to cater to individual differences.

Use of psychotherapy techniques of counselling and family therapy is helpful to enhance well-being and promote adjustment of individuals across the life span.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- Note :** a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided below.
- b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. What is the criteria to establish any value as superior value?

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we have discussed the meaning and concept of personality and adjustment. We started with the basic issues which affect personality and thereby, adjustment. The various aspects of personality were discussed in detail. A comprehensive view on personality was focussed upon. Areas of adjustment, characteristics of adjustment, characteristics of adjustment and how to achieve adjustment for healthy living and fruitful and satisfied life were discussed.

2.8 GLOSSARY

Denial	:	Defense mechanism in which a person does not acknowledge anxiety provoking stimuli.
Extraversion	:	Directing libido towards things in the external world.
Emotional intelligence	:	Emotional abilities to deal with other people.
Existentialism	:	Philosophy concerned with meaning to human existence.
External locus of control	:	Belief that factors outside the individual determine whether the desired outcome is achieved or not.
Gestalt	:	German word for pattern or configuration.
Inferiority complex	:	An overwhelming feeling of helplessness or powerlessness or personal incompetencies.
Introversion	:	Directing libido towards things in the internal world.
Internal locus of control	:	Belief that individual's own actions lead to the desired outcomes.
Persona	:	A socially acceptable face shown to others.
Presses	:	Environmental pressures.
Social intelligence	:	Knowledge and skills relevant to interpersonal situations.
Thema	:	A typical combination of presses and needs.
Trait	:	Trait has been defined by Allport as a generalized neuropsychic stricture or core tendency that underlies behaviour across time and situations.

2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Psychoanalytic, neo-analytical, biological, behaviourist, cognitive, trait, humanistic and existentialism and social interactionist perspectives.
2. Trait has been defined by Allport as a generalized neuropsychic structure or core tendency that underlies behaviour across time and situations.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Hartmann gave the criteria to find a superior value. According to him, value to be superior should have characteristics like inclusiveness, permanence, irrevocability, congruency, cognitive completeness and survival.

2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the existentialism perspective of personality in the light of tsunami and its after effects.
2. Describe the factors which would promote well-being of individuals.
3. What are the characteristics of adjustment?
4. Describe the role of culture and its influence on personality development.
5. Is Freud's theory effective in today's modern lifestyle with sexual expression being open and out? Discuss psychoanalytic perspective in detail.

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UNIT 3 SOCIAL COGNITION

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Definition of Social Cognition
- 3.3 Domains of Social Cognition
 - 3.3.1 Emotional Processing
 - 3.3.2 Social Perception
 - 3.3.3 Attribution
 - 3.3.4 Theory of Mind
- 3.4 Goals of Social Cognition
 - 3.4.1 Goal 1: Conserving Mental Effort
 - 3.4.2 Goal 2: Managing Self Image
 - 3.4.3 Goal 3: Seeking Accuracy
- 3.5 Mental Representation of Social Information: Schemas
- 3.6 Types of Schemas
- 3.7 Functions of Schemas
- 3.8 Priming: Which Schemas Guide Your Thought
- 3.9 Impact of Schemas on Social Cognition
- 3.10 How do Schemas Work
- 3.11 Modes of Social Thought
- 3.12 Affect and Social Cognition
- 3.13 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.14 Glossary
- 3.15 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 3.16 Unit End Questions
- 3.17 Further Readings and References

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Humans are social animals and spend a great deal of time in social relationships. As children develop, they gain a better understanding of peers and adults around them. They become aware that people can differ on what they believe, know, and want. Their values and goals can be different from our own. Some people call this “mindreading of other people’s minds”. Scientists often call this kind of understanding social cognition or theory of mind. At one time social cognition referred specifically to an approach of social psychology in which these processes were studied according to the methods of cognitive psychology and information processing theory. However the term has come to be more widely used across psychology

and cognitive neuroscience. For example, “social cognition” is used to refer to various social abilities disrupted in autism and other disorders. In cognitive neuroscience the biological basis of social cognition is investigated. Developmental psychologists study the development of social cognition abilities.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Define social cognition;
- Describe domains of social cognition;
- Delineate goals of social cognition;
- Understand schemas; and
- Discuss impact of schemas on social cognition.

3.2 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL COGNITION

In simple terms we can say that social cognition refers to the mental processes by which we make sense of our social worlds.

Numerous ways to define the term —

- How do we think about the world
- How do we process social information
- How do we organize the social targets in our lives
- Social judgement
- The intersection of cognitive and social psychology
- Social Cognition is encoding, storage, retrieval, and processing, in the brain, of information relating to social environment.

Social cognition can be defined as “ the manner in which we interpret, analyze, remember and use information about the social world” (Baron & Byrne, 2009).

3.3 DOMAINS OF SOCIAL COGNITION

There are four domains of social cognition which are explained below.

3.3.1 Emotional Processing

Emotional processing refers broadly to perceiving and using emotions adaptively. One influential model of emotional processing defines emotional intelligence as a set of four components: identifying emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer, Salovey,

Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). This model includes affect perception, a domain of emotion processing that is frequently measured in schizophrenia research. Measures of emotion processing vary broadly and include ratings of emotions that are displayed in faces or voices or ratings of how individuals manage, regulate, or facilitate emotion based on their responses to brief written or videotaped vignettes of people interacting.

3.3.2 Social Perception

The process through which we seek to know and understand other people is called social perception. Tests of social perception assess an individual's ability to identify social roles, societal rules, and social context. In social perception tasks, participants must process nonverbal, voice intonation, and/or verbal cues to make inferences about complex or ambiguous social situations. Individuals may be asked to identify interpersonal features in a situation such as intimacy, status, and mood state. Social perception can include "relationship perception", which refers to perception of the nature of relationships between people as opposed to perception of individuals acting alone.

3.3.3 Attributions

Attributions are causal statements that either include or imply the word "because". Attribution bias or style reflects how people typically infer the causes of particular positive and negative events.

3.3.4 Theory of Mind

Theory of mind refers to the ability to infer the intentions, dispositions, and beliefs of others. Much of the initial interest in this area focussed on studies of children and how theory of mind is acquired in normal and abnormal development.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of this Unit.

1. State whether the following statements are 'true' or 'false' :

- a) Social cognition is encoding, storage, retrieval, and processing, in the brain, of information relating to social environment.
- b) Social cognition has two domains.
- c) Theory of mind is a domain of social cognition.
- d) Emotional intelligence has three components.

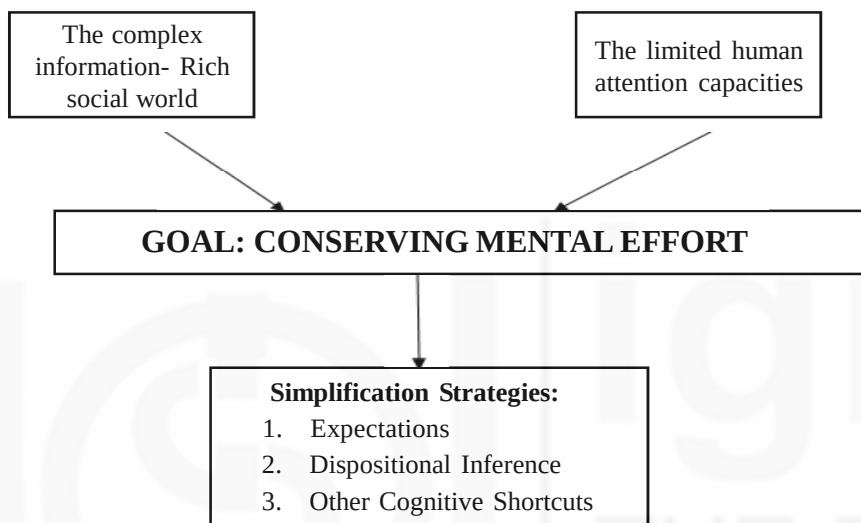
3.4 GOALS OF SOCIAL COGNITION

Following are the three important goals of social cognition:

- Conserving Mental Effort
- Managing Self-Image
- Seeking Accuracy

Let us take a look at the done said three goals individually.

3.4.1 Goal 1: Conserving Mental Effort



Above diagram suggests that we live in a complex social world which is rich in information whereas our capacity to pay attention is very limited. So it is important to conserve our mental effort by using various **simplification strategies** such as:

1. Expectations: We often think in ways that tend to preserve our expectations. We pay attention to behaviours relevant to our expectations and most of the time, we interpret ambiguous events/behaviours in ways that support our expectations. Similarly, we remember people and events consistent with our expectations. Sometimes we try to change the situation based upon our expectations; which is known as *self-fulfilling prophecies*.

2. Dispositional inferences

Dispositional inferences can be explained in terms of judgements that a person's behaviour was caused by his or her personality. It could lead to following errors/biases in thinking:

- *Correspondence bias (fundamental attribution error)*

The correspondence bias describes the tendency to over-value dispositional or personality-based explanations for the observed behaviours of others while under-valuing situational explanations for those behaviours. The fundamental attribution error is most visible when people explain the behaviour of others.

- *Actor-observer difference*

It refers to the tendency for individuals to judge their own behaviours as caused by situational forces but the behaviour of another as caused by his or her personality. Consider how easily we explain our own socially undesirable behaviour (such as angry outbursts) to extenuating, stressful circumstances, and yet we are less sympathetic when others behave in this way. Instead, we often conclude that the person is intolerant, impatient, unreasonable, selfish, etc.

3. Other cognitive shortcuts: called 'heuristics' (mental shortcuts)

Our capacity to process incoming information is definitely limited and can easily be exceeded. At any given time, we are capable of handling a certain amount of information; additional input beyond this level puts us into a state of information overload. In addition, our processing capacity can be depleted by high levels of stress or other demands on us. To deal with such situations, we adopt various strategies designed to "stretch" our cognitive processes. One of such tactics is known as *heuristics* or mental shortcuts people use to make judgements quickly and efficiently. It includes three kinds of heuristics i.e. representativeness heuristics, availability heuristics, anchoring and adjustment heuristics:

- *Representativeness Heuristics*

It is a mental shortcut – classifying something as belonging to a certain category to the extent that it is similar to a typical case from that category. Example — A person with black coat, white shirt, black bow and files in hand, you can conclude easily that the person seems to be a Lawyer.

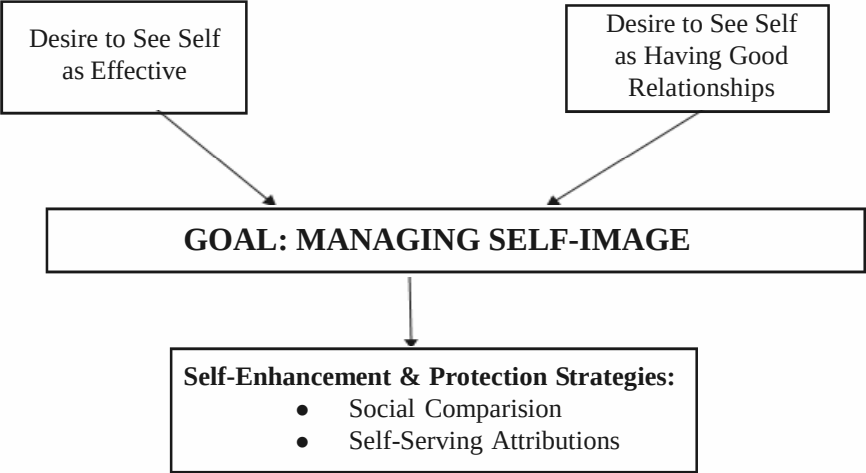
- *Availability Heuristics*

It is another mental shortcut – estimating the likelihood of an event by the ease with which instances of that event come to mind. Availability heuristics can lead to overestimate the likelihood of the events that are dramatic but rare because they are easy to bring to mind. Consistent with this principle, many people fear travel in airplanes more than travel in automobiles, even though the chances of dying in an auto accident are hundreds of times higher.

- *Anchoring and Adjustments Heuristics*

It refers to heuristics that involves the tendency to use a number of value as a starting point to which we then make adjustments. This heuristics involves the tendency to deal with uncertainty in many situations by using something we do know as a starting point and then making adjustments to it. For instance, in day to day shopping experience, the seller's price provides such a starting point to which buyers try to make adjustments to lower the price they pay. Such lowering makes the buyer feel that by comparison to the original asking price, they are getting a good deal. However these adjustments may not be sufficient to reflect actual social reality, perhaps, because once we attain a plausible value, we stop the process.

3.4.2 Goal 2: Managing Self-Image



The above diagram suggests that we all have a strong desire to see our self as effective and having good relationships, so it is important to manage our own self image with the help of *self enhancement and protection strategies like* the following:-

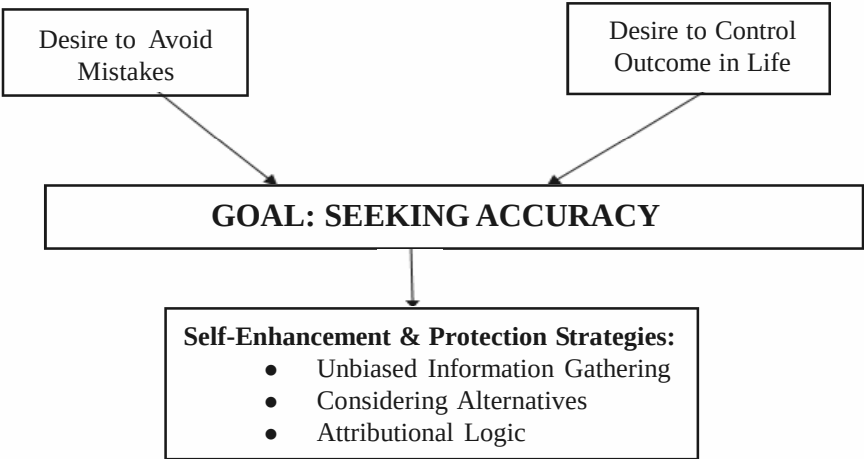
(a) **Social comparison**, done in two ways:

- **Downward social comparison:** In this process, we compare ourselves with those who are less well off than us for managing our self image and self enhancement. It is a defensive tendency to compare oneself with someone whose troubles are more serious than one’s own. For example, a breast cancer patient may have had a lumpectomy, but sees herself as better off than another patient who lost her breast.
- **Upward social comparison:** In this process, we compare ourselves with those who are better off than ourselves to protect our self image and enhance our self. For example, a “C” grade student compares himself to an “A” grade student in order to inspire himself to study more.

(b) **Self-serving attributions**

It is the tendency to take credit for our successes and to blame external factors for our failures. For example, if you get a great grade on your exam, why will that be? Because you’re smart? Because you studied hard? What if you get a low grade? Will that be because the exam was too hard? Because you have a bad teacher? This is called *self-serving attributions/bias*.

3.4.3 Goal 3: Seeking Accuracy



The above diagram suggests that we all have a strong desire to avoid mistakes and control outcome in our life, so it becomes utmost important for us to achieve the goal of seeking accuracy by using various **accuracy strategies** like following:

- **Unbiased Information Gathering**

It is the tendency to seek unbiased information even if that may go against what people previously know or suspect. This desire for accuracy leads people to pay special attention to new information in an unbiased manner.

- **Considering Alternatives**

With difficult decisions, it is important to be accurate in our judgements. So people would often like to consider the opposite side of the argument because that may be helpful in taking an accurate decision.

- **Attribution logic**

Attribution logic is basically concerned with seeking the causes of behaviour. These theories are specifically designed to explain how people determine the causes of behaviour. We apply attribution logic in our day to day life by using Covariation model.

Covariation model – When explaining other people's behaviours, we look for similarities (covariation) across a range of situations to help us narrow down specific attributions. There are three particular types of information we look for to help us decide; each of which can be high or low:

Consensus: How similarly other people act, given the same stimulus, as the person in question. Does everybody do it?

Distinctiveness: How similarly the person acts in different situations, towards other stimuli. Does it occur only in this situation?

Consistency: How often the same stimulus and response in the same situation are perceived. Does it occur repeatedly?

People tend to make *internal* attributions when consensus and distinctiveness are low but consistency is high. They will make *external* attributions when consensus and distinctiveness are both high and consistency is still high. When consistency is low, they will make *situational attributions*.

Let us consider the following example. When a girl went into a boutique and tried on a dress, the salesman told the girl that the dress looked very nice on her. The girl might have the following three different types of attribution towards the salesman's behaviour.

If all the salesmen in the boutique told the girl that the dress was nice on her (*consensus is high*); and the salesman only said she looked nice for one particular dress (*distinctiveness is high*); and the salesman said so every time the girl went into the boutique (*consistency is high*), the girl was likely to attribute the salesman's behaviour to the *object*. Thus, she would conclude that the salesman said so because the dress was nice.

If only one particular salesman told the girl that the dress was nice on her (**consensus is low**); and the salesman said she looked nice in other dresses in the boutique as well (**distinctiveness is low**); and the salesman said so every time the girl went into the boutique (**consistency is high**), the girl was likely to attribute the salesman's behaviour to the **person**. Thus,

she would conclude that the salesman said so because the salesman was nice.

If only one particular salesman told the girl that the dress was nice on her (*consensus is low*); and the salesman only said she looked nice in one particular dress (*distinctiveness is high*); and the salesman said so only this time the girl went into the boutique (*consistency is low*), the girl was likely to attribute the salesman's behaviour to the *context*. Thus, she would conclude that the salesman said so because he or she had to fulfill a sales quota on that dress.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Fill in the blanks:

- a. Changing the situation based upon our expectations is known as.....
- b is a defensive tendency to compare oneself with someone whose troubles are more serious than one's own.
- c. refers to seeking the causes of behaviour.
- d. People tend to make internal attribution when and are low, but consistency is high.

3.5 MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL INFORMATION: SCHEMAS

Schemas are mental frameworks for organizing and using social information. Social psychologists define schemas as mental structures that help us to organize social information and guide the processing of such information. Because our personal experience is probably similar to that of other people in our culture in many respects, all people in a given society tend to share certain basic schemas. For instance, in India, most people have similar schemas for meeting someone in party or eating in a restaurant. Once schemas are formed, they play a role in determining what we notice about the social world, what information we remember and how we use and interpret such information. Thus schemas have an important impact on our understanding of the social world and ultimately our relations with other people.

3.6 TYPES OF SCHEMAS

Person schemas – They are often referred to as person prototypes; which are configurations of personality traits that we use to categorize people and to make inferences about their behaviour. Person schemas enable us to answer the question: 'What kind of person is he or she?' (Cantor & Mischel, 1979). In so doing, they help us to anticipate the nature of our social interactions with individuals, giving us a sense of control and predictability.

Self schemas – Self schemas are cognitive representations of the self that organize and process all information that is related to the self. Just as we represent and store information about others, we do the same about ourselves, developing complex and varied schemas that define our self-concept based on past experiences. They develop from self-descriptions and traits that are salient and important to our self-concept. Indeed, they can be described as components of self-concept that are central to our identity and self-definition. Different self schemas become activated depending on the changing situations and contexts in which we find ourselves (Markus & Kunda, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987). For example, your self schema as fun-loving and frivolous when you are with your friends may be quite different from your self schema as serious and dutiful when you are with your family.

Role schemas – Role schemas are knowledge structures of the behavioural norms and expected characteristics of specific role positions in society based on people's age, gender, race, occupation, etc. They will include both achieved roles – including occupational and professional roles, such as doctor or teacher, and ascribed roles, over which we have little control – such as age, gender and race. The roles and expectations associated with these categories are commonly referred to as stereotypes – mental representations of social groups and their members that are widely shared (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994).

Event schemas – Commonly referred to as cognitive scripts, event schemas describe behavioural and event sequences in everyday activities such as eating at a restaurant, attending a lecture or shopping at a supermarket. They provide the basis for anticipating the future, setting goals and making plans. We know, for example, that the appropriate behavioural sequence for eating at a restaurant is to enter, wait to be seated, order a drink, look at the menu, order the meal, eat, pay the bill and leave. The key idea here is that our commonsense understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in specific situations is stored in long-term memory, and it is activated unconsciously whenever we need it.

3.7 FUNCTIONS OF SCHEMAS

Schemas serve four important functions in our day to day life, i.e.:

1. Schemas simplify the complexity of the social world
2. Schemas guide the processing of schema relevant information
3. Schemas influence our inferences and evaluations of social information
4. Schemas guide our behaviour and thought.

3.8 PRIMING: WHICH SCHEMAS GUIDE OUR THOUGHT

As a result of our rich and varied experiences, we all develop a large array of schemas. That raises an interesting question: Which of these frameworks influence our thought at any given point in time?

One answer involves the strength of various schemas: the stronger and more well developed schemas are more likely to influence our thinking and especially our memory for social information.

Second, schemas can be temporarily activated by **priming** - it is a situation that occurs when stimuli or events increase the availability in memory or consciousness of specific types of information held in memory. For instance, if you read about a car accident in the newspaper, you might find yourself driving very cautiously all day. This illustrates the effects of priming; recent experiences make some schemas more active than they would otherwise be, and as a result, they exert stronger effects on current thinking. Once they are primed, the effects of the schemas persist until they are somehow expressed in thought or behaviour; such expression (known as **unpriming**) then reduces the likelihood that they will influence thought or behaviour.

3.9 IMPACT OF SCHEMAS ON SOCIAL COGNITION

How do schemas influence social thought? Research findings suggest that they influence three basic processes i.e. attention, encoding and retrieval.

Attention: It refers to what information we notice. With respect to attention, schemas often act as a kind of filter: information consistent with them is more likely to be noticed and to enter our consciousness. Information that does not fit with our schemas is often ignored (Fiske, 1993), unless it is so extreme that we can't help but notice it.

Encoding: It refers to the specific information that is entered into memory; the information that becomes the focus of our attention is much more likely to be stored in long-term memory. In general, information that is consistent with our schemas is encoded. However the information that is sharply inconsistent with our schemas – information that does not agree with our expectations in a given situation, may sometimes be encoded in separate memory location and marked with a unique “tag”. After all, it is so unexpected that it literally seizes our attention and almost forces us to make a mental note of it. For example: you have a well developed schema for the role of teacher. You expect a teacher to come to class, to give lecture, to answer questions, to give and grade exams and so on. Suppose that one of your teacher comes to class and instead of lecturing, does magic tricks. You will certainly remember these experiences because they are so inconsistent with your schema for teacher.

Retrieval: It refers to the processes through which we recover information from memory to use it in some manner – for example, in making judgements about other people. People can remember information that is consistent with their schemas to a greater extent than information that is inconsistent.

3.10 HOW DO SCHEMAS WORK

Schemas are theory-driven

Because schemas are based on our prior expectations and social knowledge, they have been described as ‘theory-driven’ structures that lend organization to experience. We use these background theories to make sense of new situations and encounters, which suggests that schematic processing is driven by background theories and suppositions rather than actual environmental data (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Schemas are unified, stable structures that resist change

Once developed and strengthened through use, schemas become integrated structures. Even when only one of its components is accessed, strong associative links between the components activate the schema as a unitary whole (Fiske & Dyer, 1985). Well-developed schemas that are activated frequently resist change and persist, even in the face of disconfirming evidence. So a male chauvinist with a highly accessible and frequently activated stereotype that women are less capable than men is rarely convinced otherwise, even when presented with evidence to the contrary. The tendency for beliefs and schemas to remain unchanged even in the face of contradictory information is known as **perseverance effect**.

3.11 MODES OF SOCIAL THOUGHTS

Following are the two basic modes of social thinking:

1. Automatic processing
2. Controlled processing

Automatic processing of social thoughts occurs in a fast, nonconscious, involuntary and intuitive manner. This occurs when, after extensive experience with a task or type of information, we reach the stage where we can perform the task or process the information in a seemingly effortless and automatic manner. One kind of automatic processing with which most people familiar occurs when we try to remember something (someone's name or a thought we previously had) but don't succeed. When that happens, we often turn to doing something else while the search for the information we want goes on automatically and without our conscious awareness. Often, this kind of memory search is successful, and the missing name or facts pops into mind. In such cases, we are dimly aware that something was happening, but can't really describe it. Research on this aspect of automatic processing confirms that it does really occur. We often attempt to deal with problems, and even complex decisions, while our attention is directed elsewhere. Perhaps even more surprising, recent evidence indicates that sometimes, it may be superior to careful, conscious thought in terms of making excellent decisions. To the extent this is true, then, we can say that automatic processing is not merely quick, effortless and efficient. It may also sometimes yield other important benefits too.

Controlled processing of social thought occurs in a systematic, logical, careful, conscious, voluntary, and highly effortful manner. Once we understand that automatic processes are efficient and effortless, whereas controlled processes are slow and effortful, it becomes clear when each kind of process is likely to matter. When conditions allow people to think slowly and carefully, controlled processes are likely to dictate behaviour. But when they are uninclined or unable to think carefully, automatic responses will be important. Similarly when people are tired or distracted or rushed, they are more likely to respond based on automatic impulses than when they are energetic, focussed, and unhurried.

3.12 AFFECT AND SOCIAL COGNITION

Affect has an impact on social cognition. Our mood changes our way of looking at things and thus our judgements about these. When we are in a happy mood, we tend to think happy thoughts and retrieve happy ideas, and similarly, when we are in a negative mood, we tend to think negative thoughts and retrieve negative ideas (Seta et al, 1994).

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: a) Read the following questions carefully and answer in the space provided below.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this Unit.

Answer these questions in 30-50 words:

1. What is priming?

.....

.....

.....

2. What are the modes of social thought?

.....

.....

.....

3. Write the name of different types of schemas.

.....

.....

.....

4. Explain the relationship between affect and social cognition.

.....

.....

.....

3.13 LET US SUM UP

This Unit is an overview of various concepts related to social cognition. Social cognition guides our behaviour in social situations so it becomes an important aspect of our life. Common to social cognition theories is the idea that information is represented in the brain as “cognitive elements” – such as schemas, attributions, or stereotypes, and a focus on how these cognitive elements are processed. Social cognition therefore applies and extends many themes, theories and paradigms from cognitive psychology.

3.14 GLOSSARY

Attribution	: The process through which we seek to identify the causes of other's behaviour.
Heuristics	: Simple rule for making complex decisions or drawing inferences in a rapid and seemingly effortless manner.
Priming	: It is a situation that occurs when stimuli or events increase the availability in memory or consciousness of specific types of information held in memory.
Social cognition	: The manner in which we interpret, analyze, remember and use information about the social world.
Schemas	: Mental frameworks centering on a specific theme that help us to organize social information.

13.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. a) True
b) False
c) True
d) False

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. a) Self fulfilling prophecy
b) Downward self comparison
c) Attribution
d) consensus, distinctiveness

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1. Priming is a situation that occurs when stimuli or events increase the availability in memory or consciousness of specific types of information held in memory.
2. Automatic and controlled processing
3. Types of schemas:
 - Person schemas
 - Self schemas
 - Role schemas
 - Event schemas

4. Affect has an impact on social cognition. Our mood changes our way of looking at things and thus our judgments about these. When we are in a happy mood, we tend to think happy thoughts and retrieve happy ideas, and similarly, when we are in a negative mood, we tend to think negative thoughts and retrieve negative ideas (Seta et al, 1994).

3.16 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by social cognition? Explain goals of social cognition.
2. What do you mean by schemas? How do schemas affect social cognition?
3. What are the modes of social thought?

3.17 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 4 PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND AGGRESSION

Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 What is Prosocial Behaviour
- 4.3 Basic Motives Underlying Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.3.1 Evolutionary Psychology and Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.3.2 Social Exchange Theory
 - 4.3.3 Altruism and Empathy
- 4.4 Personal Determinants of Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.4.1 Altruistic Personality
 - 4.4.2 Gender Differences in Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.4.3 Cultural Differences in Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.4.4 The Effects of Mood on Prosocial Behaviour
- 4.5. Situational Determinants of Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.5.1 Environment: Rural Versus Urban
 - 4.5.2 Bystander Intervention
- 4.6 Aggression: Opposite to Prosocial Behaviour
 - 4.6.1 Introduction
 - 4.6.2 Basic Definitions
- 4.7 Theories of Aggression
 - 4.7.1 Biological Aspects of Aggression
 - 4.7.2 Drive Theory
 - 4.7.3 Social Learning Theory
- 4.8 Causes of Human Aggression
 - 4.8.1 Personal Factors
 - 4.8.2 Situational Factors
- 4.9 Management of Aggression
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Helping behaviour became a concern of social psychologists following the murder of a young woman, Kitty Genovese, in New York City in 1964. Despite a number of neighbours hearing her screams for help and turning on their lights, nobody called the police until some considerable time had elapsed

and the victim of the attack was dead. An obvious question is whether this apparent indifference or apathy and failure to intervene is unusual or whether it is typical in such circumstances.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of prosocial behaviour;
- Describe basic motives underlying prosocial behaviour;
- Discuss theories of aggression and causes of aggression; and
- Analyse management of aggression.

4.2 WHAT IS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Prosocial behaviour is any act performed with the goal of benefitting another person. It includes actions that are cooperative, affectionate and helpful to others. Although the terms prosocial behaviour, helping behaviour and altruism are often used interchangeably, there are some subtle differences in meaning. Prosocial behaviour refers to behaviour that is valued positively by society. A common example of prosocial behaviour is helping behaviour – acts that intentionally help others, such as aiding a stranger in need or providing emotional or practical support to a friend. Altruism is a particular kind of helping behaviour in which the actions performed are motivated solely by the desire to benefit the recipient and without any expectation of personal gain.

4.3 BASIC MOTIVES UNDERLYING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Why do people help others? Is the willingness to help a basic impulse with genetic roots? Is it something that must be taught and nurtured in childhood? Is there a pure motive for helping, such that people are willing to aid their fellow human beings even when they have nothing to gain? Or are people willing to help only when there is something in it for them? Different psychologists have addressed these issues in the following ways.

4.3.1 Evolutionary Psychology and Prosocial Behaviour

Evolutionary psychology attempts to explain social behaviour in terms of genetic factors that evolved over time according to the principles of natural selection. According to this approach, prosocial behaviour has genetic roots.

One way that evolutionary psychologists attempt to resolve this dilemma is with the notion of **kin selection**, the idea that behaviours that help a genetic relative are favoured by natural selection (Hamilton, 1964; Meyer, 1999). People can increase the chances that their genes will be passed along not only by having their own children but also by ensuring that their genetic relatives have children. Because a person's blood relatives share some of his or her genes, the more that person ensures their survival, the greater the chance that his or her genes will flourish in future generations. Thus natural selection should favour altruistic acts directed toward genetic relatives. In

one study, for example, people reported that they would be more likely to help genetic relatives than nonrelatives in life-and-death situations, such as a house fire.

The Reciprocity Norm : To explain altruism, evolutionary psychologists also point to the norm of reciprocity, which is the expectation that helping others will increase the likelihood that they will help us in the future. The idea is that as human beings were evolving, a group of completely selfish individuals, each living in his or her own cave, would have found it more difficult to survive than a group who had learned to cooperate. Those who were most likely to survive, were people who developed an understanding with their neighbours about reciprocity: “I will help you now, with the agreement that when I need help, you will return the favour”. Because of its survival value, such a norm of reciprocity may have its roots in genetics.

Learning Social Norms : A third way in which evolutionary theory can explain altruism has been offered by Nobel laureate Herbert Simon (1990). He argued that it is highly adaptive for individuals to learn social norms from other members of a society. People who are the best learners of the norms and customs of a society have a survival advantage, because over the centuries, a culture learns such things as which foods are poisonous and how best to cooperate, and the person who learns these rules is more likely to survive than the person who does not. Consequently, through natural selection, the ability to learn social norms has become part of our genetic makeup. One norm that people learn is the value of helping others; this is considered a valuable norm in virtually all societies. In short, people are genetically programmed to learn social norms, and one of these norms is altruism (Hoffman, 1981).

In sum, evolutionary psychologists believe that people help others because of three factors that have become ingrained in our genes: kin selection, the norm of reciprocity, and the ability to learn and follow social norms.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this Unit.

1. State whether the following statements are ‘true’ or ‘false’:

- a. Prosocial behaviour is any act performed with the goal of benefitting another person. ()
- b. Evolutionary psychology attempts to explain social behaviour in terms of social factors. ()
- c. Norm of reciprocity means the expectation that helping others will increase the likelihood that they will help us in the future. ()

4.3.2 Social Exchange Theory

Though some social psychologists disagree with evolutionary approaches to prosocial behaviour, they share the view that altruistic behaviour can be

based on self-interest. *Social exchange theory* argues that much of what we do stems from the desire to maximize our rewards and minimize our costs. Helping can be rewarding in a number of ways. As we saw with the norm of reciprocity, it can increase the likelihood that someone will help us in return. Helping someone is an investment in the future, the social exchange being that someday, someone will help you when you need it. The other side of the coin, of course, is that helping can be costly. Helping decreases when the costs are high, as when it would put us in physical danger, result in pain or embarrassment, or simply take too much time. The basic assumption of social exchange theory is that people help only when the benefits outweigh the costs.

4.3.3 Altruism and Empathy

Altruism refers to behaviour motivated mainly by the desire to help someone else. Altruism is helping purely out of the desire to benefit someone else, with no benefit (and often a cost) to oneself. For example, diving into the river to save someone, even though putting yourself in grave danger. Altruism depends upon empathy. Empathy is the ability to share the emotions of another person and to understand that person's point of view. C. Daniel Batson (1991) is the strongest proponent of the idea that people often help purely out of the goodness of their hearts. Batson acknowledges that people sometimes help others for selfish reasons, such as to relieve their own distress at seeing another person suffer. But he also argues that people's motives are sometimes purely altruistic, in that their only goal is to help the other person, even if doing so involves some cost to themselves. Pure altruism is likely to come into play, when we feel *empathy* for the person in need of help, putting ourselves in the shoes of another person and experiencing events and emotions the way that person experiences them.

Batson also proposed *empathy-altruism hypothesis*; i.e. when we feel empathy for another person, we will attempt to help the person for purely altruistic reasons, regardless of what we have to gain.

In summary, we have discussed three basic motives underlying prosocial behaviour: that helping is an instinctive reaction to promote the welfare of those genetically similar to us (evolutionary psychology); that the rewards of helping often outweigh the costs, making it in people's self-interest to help (social exchange theory); and that under some conditions, powerful feelings of empathy and compassion for the victim prompt selfless giving (the empathy-altruism hypothesis).

4.4 PERSONAL DETERMINANTS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Whatever the nature of people's basic motives, these motives are not the sole determinants of whether people help, for many personal and situational factors can suppress or trigger these motives. We need to consider the personal determinants of prosocial behaviour that distinguish the helpful person from the selfish one.

4.4.1 Altruistic Personality

Psychologists have been quite interested in the nature of the *altruistic personality*, the aspects of a person's makeup that cause the person to help others in a wide variety of situations. However, personality is not the sole determinant of how people behave. According to social psychologists, to understand human behaviour, such as how helpful people will behave in a given situation, we need to consider the situational pressures impinging on them as well as their personalities. An altruistic person is high on five dimensions that are characteristic of people who engage in prosocial behaviour in an emergency situation and in many other contexts too:

1. **Empathy:** Most altruistic persons are high in empathy and they describe themselves as responsible, socialized, conforming, tolerant, self controlled and motivated to make a good impression.
2. **Belief in just world:** Helpful individuals perceive the world as a fair and predictable place in which good behaviour is rewarded and bad behaviour punished. This belief leads to the conclusion that helping those in need is the right thing to do and to the expectation that the person who helps will actually benefit from doing a good deed.
3. **Social responsibility:** The most helpful individuals also express the belief that each person is responsible for doing his or her best to assist anyone who needs help.
4. **Internal locus of control:** This is the belief that a person can choose to behave in ways that maximize good outcomes and minimize bad ones. People who fail to help, in contrast, tend to have an external locus of control and believe that their behaviour is irrelevant because outcomes are controlled by luck, fate, people with power and other uncontrollable factors.
5. **Low egocentrism:** Altruistic people do not tend to be self absorbed and competitive.

4.4.2 Gender Differences in Prosocial Behaviour

All cultures have different norms for males and females, so that men and women learn to value different traits and behaviours. In Western cultures, part of the male sex role is to be chivalrous and heroic, whereas part of the female sex role is to be nurturant and caring, valuing close, long-term relationships. As a result, we might expect men to help more in situations that call for brief chivalrous and heroic acts and women to help more in long-term relationships that involve less danger but more commitment, such as volunteering at a nursing home.

4.4.3 Cultural Differences in Prosocial Behaviour

Looking at helping behaviour from a cultural perspective highlights the need both to recognise how the meaning of help is dependent upon the cultural context and to see helping behaviour as part of the wider moral system that links individuals in social relationships. Culture establishes the implicit and explicit rules that guide both those who seek help and those who receive it.

People who grow up in Western cultures tend to be individualistic and have an *independent view of the self*, whereas people who grow up in many non-Western cultures tend to be collectivist and have an *interdependent view of the self*. Because people with an interdependent view of the self are more likely to define themselves in terms of their social relationships and have more of a sense of “connectedness” to others, it might seem that they would be more likely to help a person in need. It is important to note, however, that in all cultures, people are more likely to help someone they define as a member of their *in-group*, the group with which an individual identifies. People everywhere are less likely to help someone they perceive to be a member of an *out-group*, a group with which the individual does not identify (Brewer & Brown, 1998). Cultural factors come into play in determining how strongly people draw the line between in-groups and out-groups. In many interdependent cultures, greater importance is attached to the needs of the in-group. Consequently, members of these cultures are more likely to help in-group members than members of individualistic cultures are. However, because the line between “us” and “them” is more firmly drawn in interdependent cultures, people in these cultures are *less* likely to help members of out-groups than people in individualistic cultures are. Thus to be helped by other people, it is important that they view you as a member of their in-group — as “one of them”; and this is especially true in interdependent cultures (Ting & Piliavin, 2000).

4.4.4 The Effects of Mood on Prosocial Behaviour

As discussed earlier, personality alone is an insufficient predictor of people’s helping behaviour. One reason for this is that helping depends on a person’s current mood. Sometimes we feel up and sometimes we feel down, and these transitory emotional states are another key determinant of prosocial behaviour.

Effects of Positive Moods: Feel Good, Do Good

Researchers have found this “feel good, do good” effect in diverse situations and have shown that it is not limited to the little boost we get when we find some money. People are more likely to help others when they are in a good mood for a number of reasons, including doing well on a test, receiving a gift, thinking happy thoughts, and listening to pleasant music. And when people are in a good mood, they are more helpful in many ways, including contributing money to charity, helping someone find a lost contact lens, tutoring another student, donating blood, and helping co-workers on the job.

What is it about being in a good mood that makes people more altruistic? It turns out that good moods can increase helping for three reasons. First, good moods make us look at the bright side of life. Second, “feel good, do good” occurs because it is an excellent way of prolonging our good mood. Finally, good moods increase self-attention. At any given time, people vary in how much attention they pay to their feelings and values versus the world around them. Sometimes we are particularly attuned to our internal worlds, and sometimes we are not. Good moods increase the amount of attention we pay to ourselves, and this factor in turn makes us more likely to behave according to our values and ideals. Because most of us value altruism and because good moods increase our attention to this value, good moods increase helping behaviour.

Negative State Relief

People often act on the idea that good deeds cancel out bad deeds. When they have done something that has made them feel guilty, helping another person balances things out, reducing their guilty feelings. The idea that people help in order to alleviate their own sadness and distress is called the *negative state relief hypothesis* by Robert Cialdini (Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; Cialdini & Fultz, 1990; Cialdini et al., 1987). People help someone else with the goal of helping themselves—namely, to relieve their own sadness and distress. This is pretty obvious if we help in a way that deals with the cause of our sadness. If our best friend is depressed, we might feel a little depressed as well.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Fill in the blanks:

- a. argues that much of what we do stems from the desire to maximize our rewards and minimize our costs.
- b. proposed empathy-altruism hypothesis.
- c. would help more in situations that call for brief chivalrous and heroic acts and help more in long-term relationships that involve less danger but more commitment.
- d. People help in order to alleviate their own sadness and distress is called the

4.5 SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

To understand more fully why people help, we need to consider the social situation as well in which they find themselves. Situational determinants of prosocial behaviour are as follows:

4.5.1 Environment: Rural Versus Urban

Several researchers have compared the likelihood that people will help in rural versus urban areas and have consistently found that people in rural areas help more (Korte, 1980; Steblay, 1987). People in small towns have been found to be more helpful in many respects, including helping a stranger who has had an accident, helping a lost child, giving directions, and returning a lost letter. Why are our chances of being helped greater in small towns? One possibility is that the experience of growing up in a small town enhances the altruistic personality, whereas growing up in a big city diminishes the altruistic personality.

According to this view, you would be more likely to be helped by someone who grew up in a small town, even if that person were visiting a big city. The key is the values the small-town resident has internalized, not the immediate

surroundings. Alternatively, it might be that people's immediate surroundings that are the key and not their personalities. Stanley Milgram (1970), for example, proposed the *urban overload hypothesis*, which holds that people living in cities are constantly being bombarded with stimulation and that they keep to themselves in order to avoid being overloaded by it. According to this argument, if you put urban dwellers in a calmer, less stimulating environment, they would be as likely as anyone else to reach out to others.

4.5.2 Bystander Intervention

Research by Darley and Latane (1968) suggested that bystanders will intervene only if they notice an incident, interpret it as an emergency, assume responsibility for taking action, know the appropriate action to take, and decide to take action. At each stage, the presence of other people can deter an individual from making a decision that will lead to them helping. People in groups are less likely than a solitary individual to notice an unusual situation or to define it as an emergency. Moreover, when people believe that others are aware of someone's distress – as was the case in the Kitty Genovese murder, responsibility is distributed or diffused across the group and any single individual is less likely to help than when they believe they bear sole responsibility for taking action.

Bystander effect; the fact that any particular bystander is less likely to give help with other bystanders present; has been shown to emerge in a range of situations, including making an emergency phone call, picking up dropped money or other items, aiding a stranded motorist, helping someone having an epileptic seizure, donating blood, and contributing money or time. The effect appears to involve two separate processes: pluralistic ignorance and diffusion of responsibility.

Pluralistic ignorance refers to the phenomenon whereby bystanders assume that nothing is wrong in an emergency because no one else looks concerned. Its occurrence highlights the social and shared nature of much of our behaviour – we rely on the actions of others to decide what is appropriate behaviour in a particular setting.

Diffusion of responsibility refers to decrease in the degree of responsibility felt by each person in association with the number of people present. When people believe responsibility to act is shared with others (i.e. diffused), then they feel less personal responsibility to act.

Latané and Darley (1970) developed a step-by-step description of how people decide whether to intervene in an emergency which is shown below.



The above figure is a depiction of the bystander intervention decision tree; the five steps to helping in an emergency.

Latané and Darley (1970) showed that people go through five decision-making steps before they help someone in an emergency. If bystanders fail to take any one of the five steps, they will not help. Each step, as well as the possible reasons for why people decide not to intervene, is outlined here in the graphical depiction above (*Adapted from Latané & Darley, 1970*).

In a nutshell, it can be said that there are different determinants of prosocial behaviour. These determinants include genetic factors, our social expectation, empathy, altruism, good mood, environment and situation. All of these factors determine our decision to help.

4.6 AGGRESSION: OPPOSITE TO PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

4.6.1 Introduction

Aggressive behaviour is viewed as one of the most disturbing forms of human social behaviour. Every night on the news there are reports about murders, wars, and rapes. But the news isn't the only place where people encounter violent or aggressive behaviour. Driving home from work, people get cut off and cussed at on a daily basis. At school, children fight over who will be the first in the lunch line. On the street, people get pushed out of the way if they are not walking fast enough. The list could go on and on and on. The point is that humans exhibit aggressive behaviour on a regular basis. However, does anyone know why people display these behaviours? Why do certain people seem more aggressive? Is there just one thing that controls when and how aggressive someone becomes? These are all questions that researchers have been addressing for many years.

4.6.2 Basic Definitions

Aggression

Human aggression is any behaviour directed toward another individual that is carried out with the *proximate* (immediate) intent to cause harm. In addition, the perpetrator must believe that the behaviour will harm the target, and that the target is motivated to avoid the behaviour (Bushman & Anderson 2001). Accidental harm is not aggressive because it is not intended. Harm that is an incidental by-product of helpful actions is also not aggressive, because the harm-doer believes that the target is not motivated to avoid the action (e.g., pain experienced during a dental procedure).

Hostile vs. Instrumental Aggression

Hostile aggression has historically been conceived as being impulsive, thoughtless (i.e., unplanned), driven by anger, having the ultimate motive of harming the target, and occurring as a reaction to some perceived provocation. It is sometimes called affective, impulsive, or reactive aggression. *Instrumental aggression* is conceived as a premeditated means of obtaining some goal other than harming the victim, and being proactive rather than reactive (Berkowitz 1993, Geen 2001).

4.7 DOMAIN SPECIFIC THEORIES OF AGGRESSION

4.7.1 Biological Aspects of Aggression

The oldest and probably the most famous explanations for human aggression suggest that human beings are somehow “programmed” for violence by their basic nature. Such theories attribute human violence to built-in (i.e. inherited) urges to aggress against others. The most famous supporter of this theory was Sigmund Freud, who held that aggression stems mainly from a powerful death wish (*thanatos*) possessed by all people. According to Freud, this instinct is initially aimed at self-destruction, but is soon redirected outward towards others.

The related view was proposed by Konrad Lorenz, a Noble Prize winning ethologist, who suggested that aggression springs mainly from an inherited fighting instinct, which assures that only the strongest males will obtain mates and pass their genes on to the next generation.

With the growth of the evolutionary perspective in psychology, however, this situation has changed. While most social psychologist continue to reject the view that human aggression stems largely from innate factors, some now accept the possibility that genetic factors play some role in human aggression. The biological approach to aggression includes the belief that the propensity for aggressive behaviour lies in an individual’s genetic makeup.

Neurotransmitters

Neurotransmitters are chemicals that enable impulses within the brain to be transmitted from one area of the brain to another. There is some evidence that at least two of these neurotransmitters, serotonin and dopamine, are linked to aggressive behaviour. Serotonin and dopamine are of particular interest because low levels of serotonin and high levels of dopamine have been associated with aggression in animals and humans.

Hormones

The male sex hormone testosterone is thought to influence aggression from young adulthood onwards due to its action on brain areas involved in controlling aggression. Cortisol appears to have a mediating effect on other aggression-related hormones such as testosterone, possibly because it increases anxiety and the likelihood of social withdrawal.

Twin studies

Monozgyotic twins (genetically identical) display, more similar levels of aggressive behaviour than dizygotic twins, indicating genetic influence. Adoption studies can help to untangle the relative contributions of environment and heredity in aggression. If a positive correlation is found between aggressive behaviour in adopted children and aggressive behaviour in their biological parents, a genetic effect is implied. If a positive correlation is found between the adoptee's aggressive behaviour and the rearing family, then an environmental effect is implied. A study of over 14,000 adoptions in Denmark found that a significant number of adopted boys with criminal convictions had biological parents (particularly fathers) with criminal convictions (Hutchings and Mednick, 1975), providing evidence for a genetic effect.

4.7.2 Drive Theory

Dollard & Miller (1939) proposed a theory known as *frustration-aggression hypothesis*. According to this view, frustration leads to the arousal of a drive whose primary goal is that of harming some person or object—primarily the perceived cause of frustration (Berkowitz, 1989). The central role assigned to frustration by the frustration – aggression hypothesis has turned out to be largely false – frustration is only one of many different causes of aggression.

4.7.3 Social Learning Theory

According to social learning theories (Bandura 1983), people acquire aggressive responses the same way they acquire other complex forms of social behaviour—either by direct experience or by observing others. Social learning theory explains the acquisition of aggressive behaviours, via observational learning processes, and provides a useful set of concepts for understanding and describing the beliefs and expectations that guide social behaviour. Social learning theory—especially key concepts regarding the development and change of expectations and how one construes the social world—is particularly useful in understanding the acquisition of aggressive behaviours and in explaining instrumental aggression.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of this Unit.

1. State whether the following statements are 'true' or 'false':

- a. Accidental harm is not aggressive because it is not intended. ()
- b. Concept of death wish (*thanatos*) was proposed by Konard Lorenz. ()
- c. Serotonin and dopamine are linked to aggressive behaviour. ()
- d. Frustration-aggression hypothesis was given by Sigmund Freud. ()

4.8 CAUSES OF HUMAN AGGRESSION

Aggression research focusses on discovering what are the factors that influence aggressive behaviour, and on how to use these discoveries to reduce unwarranted aggression. These factors can be categorized as features of the situation or as features of the person in the situation.

4.8.1 Personal Factors

Person factors include all the characteristics a person brings to the situation, such as personality traits, attitudes, and genetic predispositions. Stable person factors are those that display consistency across time, across situations, or across both. In a very real sense, personality is the sum of a person's knowledge structures. Knowledge structures also influence what situations a person will selectively seek out and what situations will be avoided, further contributing to trait-like consistency. Together, person factors comprise an individual's preparedness to aggress.

Traits: Certain traits predispose individuals to high levels of aggression. The idea of an "aggressive personality" is quite an attractive one. 'Type A Personality' is a behaviour pattern consisting primarily of high level of competitiveness, time urgency and hostility. Those who exhibit this pattern of behaviour are hyperactive and very competitive in their interactions with other people. They are also more aggressive towards those whom they perceive in as competing an important task.

Gender Differences: Males and females differ in aggressive tendencies, especially in the most violent behaviours of homicide and aggravated assault. Men are much more likely to engage in *physical aggression*. Men and women are equally likely to engage in *verbal aggression*. Men and women experience aggression differently (Cambell & Muncer, 1987). Women view their aggression as often coming from excessive stress and a loss of self-control. Males often view aggressive acts as an exercise in control over others, brought on by a challenge to their self-esteem or integrity. Men are more likely to view their aggressive acts as positive (instrumental aggression). Women feel more guilt and concern after being aggressive than men. Recently, researchers have also considered *indirect aggression*; for instance, gossiping, spreading false rumours, revealing someone's secrets without their permission. Research in Finland showed adolescent girls are much more likely to engage in indirect aggression than teenage boys (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspatz, & Kaukainen, 1992).

Beliefs: Many types of beliefs play a role in preparedness to aggress. Efficacy related beliefs are particularly important (e.g., Bandura 1977). Those who believe that they can successfully carry out specific aggressive acts (*self-efficacy*) and that these acts will produce the desired outcomes (*outcome efficacy*) are much more likely to select aggressive behaviours than those who are not so confident of the efficacy of aggressive acts.

Attitudes: Attitudes are general evaluations people hold about themselves, other people, objects, and issues. Positive attitudes towards violence in general also prepare certain individuals for aggression. More specific positive attitudes about violence against specific groups of people also increase aggression against those people. For example, attitudes about violence against women

are positively related to sexual aggressiveness against women. Males prone to aggress against women are not generally aggressive against all people in all situations; rather, they specifically target women (but not men) who have provoked them (Anderson, 1996).

Values: Values, or beliefs about what one should or ought to do, also play a role in aggression preparedness. For many people, violence is a perfectly acceptable method of dealing with interpersonal conflict, perhaps even a preferred method.

4.8.2 Situational Factors

Situational factors include any important features of the situation, such as presence of a provocation or an aggressive cue. Like the person factors, situational factors influence aggression by influencing cognition, affect, and arousal.

Aggressive cues: Aggressive cues are objects that prime aggression-related concepts in memory. For instance, Berkowitz and LePage (1967) found that the mere presence of guns (versus badminton racquets and shuttlecocks) increased the aggressive behaviour of angered research participants. Other situational variables that increase aggression, such as exposure to violent television, movies, or video games, also appear to do so via cognitive cueing effects (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Bushman, 1998).

Provocation: Perhaps the most important single cause of human aggression is interpersonal provocation (Berkowitz, 1993; Geen, 2001). Provocations include insults, slights, other forms of verbal aggression, physical aggression, interference with one's attempts to attain an important goal, and so on.

Frustration: Frustration can be defined as the blockage of goal attainment. Most provocations can be seen as a type of frustration in which a person has been identified as the agent responsible for the failure to attain the goal. Even frustrations that are fully justified have been shown to increase aggression against the frustrating agent (e.g., Dill & Anderson, 1995) and against a person who was not responsible for the failure to attain the goal. More recent work has shown that displaced aggression, wherein the target of aggression is not the person who caused the initial frustration, is a robust phenomenon. Whether such frustration effects operate primarily by influencing cognitions, affect, or arousal is unclear.

Pain and Discomfort: Other research has shown that even non-social aversive conditions (e.g., hot temperatures, loud noises, unpleasant odours) increase aggression (Berkowitz, 1993). Acute aversive conditions, such as pain produced by immersing a hand in a bucket of ice water, increase aggression. General discomfort, such as that produced by sitting in a hot room, can also increase aggression; this effect appears to be mediated primarily by increasing negative affect, though there may be cognitive and arousal processes at work too (Anderson et al., 2000).

Drugs: Various drugs such as alcohol and caffeine can also increase aggression. These effects appear to be indirect rather than direct; Bushman (1997) found that aggression-facilitating factors (e.g., provocation, frustration, aggressive cues) have a much stronger effect on people who are under the influence of drugs than on people who are not.

4.9 MANAGEMENT OF AGGRESSION

Aggression is not an inevitable or unalterable form of behaviour. On the contrary, because it stems from a complex interplay between cognition, situational factors, and personal characteristics, it can be prevented or reduced through some useful techniques.

Punishment: In most societies throughout the world, punishment – delivery of aversive consequences, is a major technique for reducing aggression. People who engage in such behaviour receive large fines, are put in prison, and in some countries are placed in solitary confinement or receive physical punishment for their aggressive actions.

Self-Regulation: From an evolutionary perspective, aggression can be viewed as adaptive behaviour, at least in some situations. For instance, competition for desirable mates is often intense, and one way to “win” in such contests is through aggression against potential rivals. On the other hand, living together in human society often requires restraining aggressive behaviour. Lashing out at others in response to every provocation is not adaptive and can greatly disrupt social life. For this reason, it is clear that we possess effective internal mechanism for restraining anger and overt aggression. Such mechanisms are described by the term self-regulation (or self-control) and refers to our capacity to regulate many aspects of own behaviour, indulging aggression.

Positive Self-talk: Another very powerful *anger management technique* is to change the inner conversation that you have with yourself (also known as *self-talk*). It is a very normal daily occurrence for people to have an inner dialogue that can either get them more worked up (e.g., “If he even looks at me the wrong way, I’m going to explode”) or put them in a calmer frame of mind (e.g., “Relax, stay calm, I can get through this”). The words we say to ourselves are very powerful and can definitely influence how we feel and how we subsequently behave.

Forgiveness: Giving up the desire to punish someone who has hurt us and seeking, instead, to act in kind, helpful ways toward them, may be highly beneficial in many ways, including the reduction of subsequent aggression.

Multisystemic therapy: One approach that appears promising is multisystemic therapy. Multisystemic therapy is a family based approach that first identifies the major factors contributing to the delinquent and violent behaviours of the individual undergoing treatment. Biological, school, work, peer group, family and neighbourhood factors are examined. Intervention is then tailored to fit the individual constellation of contributing factors. Opportunities to observe and commit further violent and criminal offenses are severely restricted, whereas prosocial behaviour opportunities are greatly enhanced and rewarded. Both the long-term success rate and the cost/benefit ratio of this approach have greatly exceeded other attempts at treating violent individuals.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have learnt about the importance of prosocial behaviour and its biological, personal and situational motives. We have also discussed how

these motives determine prosocial behaviour. Aggression, which can be seen as opposite to prosocial behaviour as it has tendency to harm others, is also overviewed with its basic theories, personal and situational causes and management of the aggressive behaviour.

4.11 GLOSSARY

Altruism	: Altruism is a particular kind of helping behaviour in which the actions performed are motivated solely by the desire to benefit the recipient and without any expectation of personal gain.
Aggression	: Aggression is any behaviour directed toward another individual that is carried out with the <i>proximate</i> (immediate) intent to cause harm.
Bystander effect	: The fact that any particular bystander is less likely to give help with other bystanders present.
Frustration	: Frustration can be defined as the blockage of goal attainment.
Pluralistic Ignorance	: The phenomenon whereby bystanders assume that nothing is wrong in an emergency because no one else looks concerned.
Prosocial behaviour	: Prosocial behaviour is any act performed with the goal of benefitting another person.

4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. a) True
b) False
c) True

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. a. Social exchange theory
b. Batson
c. Men, women
d. negative state relief model

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1. a. True
b. False
c. True
d. False

4.13 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between prosocial behaviour and altruism?
2. Describe personal determinants of prosocial behaviour.
3. Differentiate between hostile and instrumental aggression.
4. What are the techniques of managing aggression?
5. Explain situational factors affecting aggression.

4.14 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 5 KARMA THEORY

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Meaning and Concept of Karma
- 5.3 Karma in Hinduism
- 5.4 Karma in Buddhism
- 5.5 Karma in Jainism
- 5.6 Karma in Sikhism
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
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5.1 INTRODUCTION

You must have heard, and read about the impact of past *karmas* on the present life, or impact of parents' actions on their children. Such things have been popularly said through ages. In this Unit, we will try to understand karma theory.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Define karma;
- Explain the concept of karma from various religious perspectives; and
- Appreciate the understanding of karma theory in today's life style.

5.2 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF KARMA

Karma (Sanskrit: *kárma*, *kárman*- “act, action, performance”; Pali: *kamma*) is the concept of “action” or “deed” in Indian religions, understood as that which causes the entire cycle of cause and effect, originating in ancient India and treated in Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist philosophies. In these systems, the effects of all deeds are viewed as actively shaping past, present, and future experiences. The results or ‘fruits’ of actions are called *karma-phala*.

A concept of *karma* (along with reincarnation, *samsara*, and *moksha*) may originate in the *shramana* tradition of which Buddhism and Jainism are continuations. This tradition influenced the *Brahmanic* religion in the early *Vedantic* (*Upanishadic*) movement of the 1st millennium BC. Reincarnation was adopted from this religious culture by *Brahmin* orthodoxy, and *Brahmins* wrote the earliest recorded scriptures

containing these ideas in the early *Upanishads*. Throughout this process, some traditions (e.g., the *Vedanta*), believe that God plays some kind of role, for example, as the dispenser of the fruits of *karma* or as exercising the option to change one's *karma* in rare instances. In general, followers of Buddhism and many Hindus consider the natural laws of causation sufficient to explain the effects of *karma*. Another view holds that a *Sadguru*, acting on God's behalf, can mitigate or work out some of the *karma* of the disciple. However, according to Jainism, neither the God nor the Guru has any role in a person's *karma*. A person himself is the sole doer and enjoyer of his *karmas* and their fruits.

According to *karma* theory, performing positive actions results in a good condition in one's experience, whereas a negative action results in a bad effect. The effects may be seen immediately or may be delayed. Delay can be until later in the present life or in the next. Thus, meritorious acts may mean rebirth into a higher station, such as a superior human or a godlike being, while evil acts result in rebirth as a human living in less desirable circumstances, or as a lower animal. Some observers have compared the action of *karma* to Western notions of sin and judgement by God or Gods, while others understand *karma* as an inherent principle of the universe without the intervention of any supernatural Being. In Hinduism, God does play a role and is seen as a dispenser of *karma*; see *Karma in Hinduism* for more details. The non-interventionist view is that of Buddhism and Jainism.

Most teachings say that for common mortals, being involved with *karma* is an unavoidable part of daily living. However, in light of the Hindu philosophical school of *Vedanta*, as well as Gautama Buddha's teachings, one is advised to avoid, control or become mindful of the effects of desires and aversions as a way to moderate or change one's *karma* (or, more accurately, one's *karmic* results or destiny).

Karma does not necessarily mean past actions. It embraces both past and present deeds. Hence in one sense, we are the result of what we were; we will be the result of what we are. In another sense, it should be added, we are not totally the result of what we were; we will not absolutely be the result of what we are. The present is no doubt the offspring of the past and is the past of the future, but the present is not always a true index of either the past or the future; so complex is the working of *Karma*.

5.3 KARMA IN HINDUISM

One of the first and most dramatic illustrations of *karma* can be found in the *Bhagavada Gita*. In this, Arjuna the protagonist is preparing for battle when he realizes that the enemy consists of members of his own family and decides not to fight. His charioteer, Krishna (an *avatar* of God), explains to Arjuna the concept of *dharma* (duty) among other things and makes him see that it is his duty to fight. The whole of the *Bhagavada Gita* within the *Mahabharata*, is a dialogue between these two on aspects of life including morality and a host of other philosophical themes. The original Hindu concept of *karma* was later enhanced by several other movements within the religion, most notably *Vedanta*, and *Tantra*.

Socio-Cultural Influences According to Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda, we produce *karma* in four ways:

- through thoughts
- through words
- through actions that we perform ourselves
- through actions others do under our instructions

Everything that we have ever thought, spoken, done or caused is ‘Karma’; as is also that which we think, speak or do this very moment. Actions performed consciously are weighted more heavily than those done unconsciously. But just as poison affects us even if taken unknowingly, suffering caused unintentionally will also give appropriate *karmic* effect. We are in a position to do something about our destiny by doing the right thing at the right time. Through positive actions, pure thoughts, prayer, *mantra* and meditation, we can resolve the influence of the *karma* in present life and turn the destiny for the better. A spiritual master knowing the sequence in which our *karma* will bear fruit, can help us. As humans, we have the opportunity to speed up our spiritual progress with practice of good *karma*. We produce negative *karma* because we lack knowledge and clarity.

Hindu scriptures divide *karma* into three kinds :

- **Sanchita** is the accumulated *karma*. It would be impossible to experience and endure all *karmas* in one life. From this stock of *sanchita karma*, a handful is taken out to serve one lifetime and this handful of actions, begins to bear fruit and will be exhausted only on their fruit being enjoyed. Hence, it is the sum of one’s past *karmas* – all actions (good and bad) that follow through from one’s past life to the next.
- **Prarabdha** or fruit-bearing *karma* is the portion of accumulated *karma* that has “ripened” and appears as a particular problem in the present life.
- **Kriyamana** is everything that we produce in current life. All *kriyamana karmas* flow in to *sanchita karma* and consequently shape our future.

In this way, so long as the stock of *sanchita karma* lasts, a part of it continues to be taken out as *prarabdha karma* for being enjoyed in one lifetime, leading to the cycle of birth and death. A *Jiva* cannot attain *moksha* until the accumulated *sanchita karmas* are completely exhausted.

Karma is also considered to be a spiritually originated law. Many Hindus see God’s direct involvement in this process, while others consider the natural laws of causation sufficient to explain the effects of *karma*.

Followers of *Vedanta* consider *Ishvara*, a personal supreme God, as playing a role in the delivery of *karma*. Theistic schools of Hinduism such as *Vedanta* thus disagree with the Buddhist and Jain views and other Hindu views that *karma* is merely a law of cause and effect but rather is also dependent on the will of a personal supreme God. Examples of a personal supreme God include Shiva in *Shaivism* or Vishnu in *Vaishnavism*. A good summary of this theistic view of *karma* is expressed by the

following: “God does not make one suffer for no reason nor does He make one happy for no reason. God is very fair and gives you exactly what you deserve.”

Karma is not punishment or retribution but simply an extended expression or consequence of natural acts. The effects experienced are also able to be mitigated by actions and are not necessarily fated. That is to say, a particular action now is not binding to some particular, pre-determined future experience or reaction; it is not a simple, one-to-one correspondence of reward or punishment.

Karma is not fate, for humans act with free will creating their own destiny. According to the Vedas, if we sow goodness, we will reap goodness; if we sow evil, we will reap evil. *Karma* refers to the totality of our actions and their concomitant reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determines our future. The conquest of *karma* lies in intelligent action and dispassionate response.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.

b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of this Unit.

1. Write down the three kinds of karma according to Hindu scriptures.

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5.4 KARMA IN BUDDHISM

In Buddhism, *karma* (Pali *kamma*) is strictly distinguished from *vipaka*, meaning “fruit” or “result”. Karma is categorized within the group or groups of cause (Pali *hetu*) in the chain of cause and effect, where it comprises the elements of “volitional activities” (Pali *sankhara*) and “action” (Pali *bhava*). Any action is understood to create “seeds” in the mind that will sprout into the appropriate result (Pali *vipaka*) when they meet with the right conditions. Most types of karmas, with good or bad results, will keep one within the wheel of *samsara*; others will liberate one to *nirvana*.

Buddhism relates karma directly to motives behind an action. Motivation usually makes the difference between “good” and “bad”, but included in the motivation is also the aspect of ignorance; so a well-intended action from an ignorant mind can easily be “bad” in the sense that it creates unpleasant results for the “actor”.

Other causal categories

In Buddhism, karma is not the only cause of everything that happens. The commentarial tradition classified causal mechanisms governing the universe as taught in the early texts in five categories, known as *Niyama Dhammas*:

- Socio-Cultural Influences**
- *Kamma Niyama*—Consequences of one’s actions
 - *Utu Niyama*—Seasonal changes and climate
 - *Bijja Niyama*—Laws of heredity
 - *Citta Niyama*—Will of mind
 - *Dhamma Niyama*—Nature’s tendency to produce a perfect type

5.5 KARMA IN JAINISM

Karma in Jainism conveys a totally different meaning than that commonly understood in the Hindu philosophy and western civilization. In Jainism, *karma* is referred to as karmic dirt, as it consists of very subtle and microscopic particles i.e. *pudgala* that pervade the entire universe. Karmas are attracted to the *karmic* field of a soul on account of vibrations created by activities of mind, speech, and body as well as on account of various mental dispositions. Hence the *karmas* are the subtle matter surrounding the consciousness of a soul. When these two components, i.e. consciousness and karma, interact, we experience the life we know at present.

According to Padmanabh Jaini “this emphasis on reaping the fruits only of one’s own karma was not restricted to the Jainas; both Hindus and Buddhist writers have produced doctrinal materials stressing the same point. Each of the latter traditions, however, developed practices in basic contradiction to such belief. In addition to *shrardha* (the ritual Hindu offerings by the son of deceased), we find among Hindus widespread adherence to the notion of divine intervention in one’s fate, while Buddhists eventually came to propound such theories like boon-granting bodhisattvas, transfer of merit and like. Only Jainas have been absolutely unwilling to allow such ideas to penetrate their community, despite the fact that there must have been tremendous amount of social pressure on them to do so.”

The key points where the theory of *Karma* in Jainism differs from the other religions, can be stated as follows:

1. *Karma* in Jainism operates as a self-sustaining mechanism as natural universal law, without any need of an external entity to manage it (absence of the exogenous “Divine Entity” in Jainism).
2. Jainism advocates that a soul’s *karma* changes even with the thoughts, and not just the actions. Thus, to even think evil of someone would endure a “*karm-bandh*” or an increment in bad *karma*. It is for this reason, that Jainism gives a very strong emphasis on “*samyak dhyān*” (rationality in thoughts) and “*samyak darshan*” (rationality in perception) and not just “*samyak charitra*” (rationality in conduct).
3. Under Jain theology, a soul is released of worldly affairs as soon as it is able to emancipate from the “*karm-bandh*”. A famous illustration is that of Mata Marudevi, the mother of Shri Rishabh Dev, the first Tirthankar of present time cycle, who reached such emancipation by elevating sequentially her thought processes, while she was visiting her Tirthankar son. This illustration explains how “*Nirvana*” and “*Moksha*” are different in Jainism, from other religions. In

the presence of a Tirthankar, another soul achieved *Keval Gyan* and subsequently *Nirvana*, without any need of intervention by the Tirthankar.

- 4. The *karmic* theory in Jainism operates endogenously. Tirthankars are not attributed “godhood” under Jainism. Thus, even the Tirthankars themselves have to go through the stages of emancipation, for attaining that state. While Buddhism does give a similar and to some extent a matching account for Shri Gautama Buddha, Hinduism maintains a totally different theory where “divine grace” is needed for emancipation.
- 5. Jainism treats all souls equally, in as much as it advocates that all souls have the same potential of attaining “*nirvana*”. Only those who make effort, really attain it.

5.6 KARMA IN SIKHISM

Within Sikhism, all living beings are described as being under the influence of *Maya*’s three qualities namely *Rajas* (mode of passion), *Tamas* (mode of ignorance), and *Saatava* (mode of goodness). Always present together in varying mix and degrees, these three qualities of *Maya* bind the Soul to the body and to the earth plane. Above these three qualities is the eternal time. Due to the influence of three modes of *Maya*’s nature, *jivas* (individual beings) perform activities under the control and purview of the eternal time. These activities are called *Karma*. The underlying principle is that *karma* is the law that brings back the results of actions to the person performing them.

This life is likened to a field (*Khet*) in which our *Karma* is the seed. We harvest exactly what we sow. No less, no more. This infallible law of *Karma* holds everyone responsible for what the person is or going to be. Based on the total sum of past *karma*, some feel close to the Pure Being in this life, and others feel separated. This is the *Gurbani*’s (Sri Guru Granth Sahib) law of *Karma*. Like other Indian as well as oriental schools of thought, the *Gurbani* also accepts the doctrines of *Karma* and reincarnation as the facts of nature.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- Note:** a) Read the following question carefully and answer in the space provided.
b) Check your answer with that provided at the end of this Unit.

- 1. What are the three qualities of *Maya*?
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.....
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5.8 LET US SUM UP

Be it Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism or Sikhism, each of these religious ideologies expound the theory of *karma* in different ways. Each of these ideologies talk about deeds or actions and their consequences as the basis and the very essence of *karma*. But what forms a very crucial part of the whole concept of *karma* is an action which is nothing but behaviour. Thus indirectly *karma* as a theory can be directed towards individuals and their respective behaviours.

Human beings live and function as members of society. It is their behaviour that ascertains if their contribution as members of society has been productive or counterproductive. Today, people resort to various means to tackle and deal with behaviour which forms the basis of their living.

Similarly, the theory of *karma* can be also be used as a tool to better understanding and a conscious awareness about one's own behaviour. The theory of *karma* talks about an action and its consequences. Similarly, it is possible for an individual to understand the basis of his or her action and thus predict the consequence or reaction that his or her action will result in. Thus, over a period of time, each person acts as a moderator or regulator of his or her own behaviour by very carefully and consciously monitoring and reflecting on the thoughts, ideas and feelings which are the primary motivators of behaviours.

More often than not, it is seen that efforts are made to repair the damage caused the result of an action. By ensuring that any action is presided over by a conscious and alert mind, one can regulate and direct one's behaviour towards a favourable consequence and thus avoid the backlash of a rash or impulsive act. Propagating the theory of *karma* as a means of understanding oneself, one's thought process, can result in both effective and meaningful behaviour.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. According to Hinduism, karma is divided into sanchita meaning accumulated karma; prarabdha meaning fruit bearing karma; and kriyamana meaning current life karma.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. The three qualities of *Maya* are *rajas*, *tamas* and *saatava*.

5.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Explain in detail how is the concept of *karma* in Jainism different from other religions.
2. Discuss *karma* theory with elders in your family and write down their belief regarding the *karma* theory according to your religion.

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MCFT-006 *APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY*

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