

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 11: Prosocial Behaviour: Part-I

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I am going to start another new module titled Pro-Social Behaviour or the Helping Behaviour. This module will talk about its social situations, how people help each other, how people influenced by the other person's help, how a person who intend to help the needy person has some different thought process that why he or she should help the person in need, what are the factors that foster pro-social behaviours, what are the cultural impact and how and what a person feels when he or she offers help or extend any help to the person who is in need. So when we are talking about this module, this will talk about some models of altruism or pro-social behaviour which are used interchangeably, pro-social or altruism that what an individual feels or how a helper feels when he is extending his help to the person in need. Sometimes it is satisfaction, sometimes it is empathy and sometimes it is joy and sometimes it is kinship that why a person is intended to help a particular person. The discussion will also extend that when we are someone who is nobody in the environment and how people and other factors in the environment foster or provokes or encourage or discourage to help the person in need who is completely novice to this environment.

So let us start with the discussion that what is pro-social behaviour or helping behaviour. So helping or pro-social behaviour is any act that benefits others. In pro-social behaviour we help the other person but at the same time we have no intention to get something in return. We can benefit the other person but we do not expect and there is no exchange of helping that to what extent and to what degree I will be benefit by that act of helping the other person.

So the term is applied to act that do not provide any direct benefit to the person who performs the act that is who is helping the other person and may even involve some degree of risk. So that is an individual's absolute discretion that how and to what extent the person is ready to take that risk to help the other person, to benefit the other person and also the person is prepared that he or she will not get anything in return to that degree. So this is known as helping or pro-social behaviour. So helping behaviour includes acts such as sharing, donating, comforting, cooperating and rescuing. As just now I mentioned that there can be some degree of risk involved when a person is performing any act of helping or pro-social behaviour.

It can be rescuing a person because of any natural disaster, it can be of any financial help to a person who is going through any financial intense financial crisis, it can be about comforting or creating a state of comfort for the other person or it can be donating some money to any organization or it can also be about empathy or sharing the other person's opinion, pain or grievances where the person feels accepted and light. When we are talking about helping behaviour these actions may be motivated by empathy, it is ability to understand the other person's feelings or stepping into the shoe of that person and then understanding that what the other person must be feeling or going through and the person shows utmost concern for the welfare of that person. So these acts include specially the act of empathy as a pro-social behaviour. Further, evidence have also suggested by social psychologists that pro-social behaviour is central to the well-being of social groups and empathy is a strong motive in eliciting pro-social behaviour. So there are two motives that why a person helps the other person in need.

The first is pro-sociality or altruism that the person wants that the other person should be benefited by his own actions. That means it will lead to the well-being or benefit of the other person and the other is empathy. Once a person comes to know about the pain or grievances of the other person then that person has a motive or a desire to help that person so that person's discomfort or pain can be decreased. So empathy and pro-sociality are the basis of helping behaviour. The term altruism is sometimes used interchangeably with pro-social behaviour but altruism is an unselfish concern for the welfare of others.

So there is a thin line difference between altruism and pro-social behaviour although they are being used interchangeably but when we talk about in deep about altruism then it actually talks about some unselfish concern for the welfare of others. That means the person is not expecting anything in return and the person is more keen to help the other person. For instance, at even at workplaces or in any work group if any employee is overloaded with work maybe another colleague or coworker can extend his help in finishing the task. Although the person knows that he or she will not get any monetary reward or recognition in return for helping his coworker to finish the job or the task. So this is altruism.

So altruism refers to pro-social behaviours that it carried out without the expectation of obtaining any external reward. It can be in form of bonus, it can be in form of hiking pay or it can be even not receiving any recognition or any internal reward that is self-reward. But it is an individual's discretion, absolute discretion to help the other person without getting any benefit in return. So basically the idea is when we are talking about pro-social and or altruism there is no exchange. It is only empathy, pro-sociality and benefit that we can offer to the person who needs some help.

Now when we are talking about the perspective about pro-social behaviour or helping behaviour then there are certain perspectives that have been studied by social psychologist in different forms of helping behaviour. That what kind of factors or determines pro-social behaviours at the same time what a person feels when he or she is helping the person in need. So social psychologists have identified certain perspectives on helping behaviour. So the first is reciprocity that indicates about reciprocal altruism. Till now we have discussed that altruism is something unselfish concern for the other person and not getting something in return at all.

But at the same time if two people are engaged in helping and receiving behaviour then there has to be some kind of reciprocity at the same time and how it can happen. For instance two people are in a group one person has surplus of food and the other person is suffering from scarcity of food. Now in that case the person who is experiencing scarcity of food the value of food is very high and the person who has surplus of food the value of food is very low. Now when the person who has surplus food is sharing that food with the person who is deprived of food then definitely the person in need has more chances of his survival that is for sure. Now this is something altruism but in the end when the same person who is also deprived of food and he is getting enough food from the other person then in next situation may be the person will also help the same person in reciprocation from where he has received the surplus of food.

Now in both the cases the idea is when two people are helping each other or any one person who is helping the person in need then there is some reciprocation and there is no exchange and they are expanding the chances of survival of both the people. So this is reciprocal altruism. So a basic rule of social life suggests that individuals tend to treat others as these persons have treated us. Now this is obvious that when we are treating the when we have treated the other person good we will also receive the same thing or when individuals tend to treat others as these persons have treated us. If the other person has treated us good then we will also treat him the good.

But at the same time when there is chances of survival is very important then both the party parties tend to help each other in reciprocation while not expecting anything in return because the survival of the chances of survival is very important. Under such circumstances when there is deprivation there is scarcity then both the groups can help each other and there is reciprocal altruism. So in choosing between cooperation and competition then this is another situation that if we are choosing between cooperation and competition we seem to adopt the general rule of reciprocity when others cooperate with us and put their selfish concern aside. Person who has surplus of food is helping the person who is in dire need of food but he has no unselfish concern because the person is trying to expand or increase the chances of survival of that person. But at the same time if the other person is not responding in the same way we do not respond in the same kind then it leads to competition where it nullifies the significance of reciprocal altruism.

Where and at the same time if the other person tries to defect or pursue their own interest then we also do the same. So we tend to respond to situations even in reciprocation that means if the other person is helping us we will also help the other person. If the person has defect our own interest then we also tend to defect. Now if there is a situation to defect that means only thinking about one's own motives then there is no way to understand that how the concept of reciprocal altruism is implicated. But yes definitely if there is chances of help giving one help and getting in return in terms of reciprocation the same help then there is a perspective of existence of reciprocal altruism.

So it is not only about reciprocity it is about reciprocal altruism that when we are helping the other person in some other situation we will also receive the same help in different kind. So this is about reciprocating altruistic behavior. If any selfish concern is existing in that reciprocation then it is not altruism it is some completely cooperation and competition. Further they have also evolved with the theory of reciprocal altruism and suggested by sharing resources such as food, organisms increase their chances of survival and thus the likelihood that they will pass their genes on to the next generation. This is what we have discussed just now that how this concept can be experienced based on understanding or giving meaning to the situation.

Further they tend to share in such a way that the benefits are relatively greater for the recipients of such cooperation while the costs are relatively minimal to the provider. As I mentioned that person who has surplus of food the value of food is not very high but the person who is suffering from scarcity of food the value is very high. So that means in both the cases the chances of survival are increasing. When the situation is reversed cooperation will again benefit both the parties and increase their chances of survival. Now if we reverse the situation that if by chance the surplus party also suffers some kind of scarcity then definitely the other

party will also benefit or try to exhibit altruistic behavior in return then again in the another instance also reverse situation also the chances of survival are very high.

Therefore organisms that act in a purely selfish manner do not gain such benefits. Now in the same example of surplus and scarcity of food example if the person who did not respond to the requirement of the surplus party also then it is an selfish concern not an unselfish concern and there the benefits are only being received by one party. So this is the perspective of reciprocal altruism. The other is negative state relief model that whenever we have some problem, we have some need, we have some grievances, we have some pain then we try to help the other person which gives which as a consequence which gives some immense satisfaction to us only. When we are in pain and we try to help the other person then it tends to reduce our pain itself.

So this is a negative state relief model. According to this model another possible motive for the helping others is in a sense the mirror image of empathy. If I am in problem and we see the other person in problem then it is a mirror image of empathy that the other person is trying to explain his or her problem and we are also in the same pain so we can weigh upon that what the person must be feeling right now because we have the same kind of pain. So this is mirror image of empathy and instead of helping because we care about the welfare of another person we understand their feelings and share them and we help because such actions allow us to reduce our own negative emotions. For example, a boy who has scored less or a poor grade in the exams he is in pain because he could not perform well but he comes to know that his junior student is also suffering from the same situation that even he or she could not score good grades in the exam then maybe in that situation that student will try to help the other person by giving him some guidance or counseling how to score good grades in the exam.

So in this type of model that is negative state relief model there is empathy mirror image of empathy there is empathetic concern and there is empathetic accuracy and emotional empathy because the other person is understanding the other person's pain the person is very much concerned for the welfare of that person and at the same time the accuracy of understanding the feeling is very precise. The person can understand touch upon the level or degree of pain he or she must be going through under such circumstances when the person tries to help the other person this tend to reduce the pain of that person that means pain of that person means the person who is offering help not who is receiving but the person who is offering help while being himself in pain. So this is negative state relief model. So in other words prosocial behavior can act as a self help undertaking to reduce one's negative effect. So a boy who could not score good grade in the marks but at the same time he is trying to help the other person to score good marks then it reduces one's own pain this is negative state relief model.

For instance we engage in a prosocial act primarily as a way to improve our own negative mode and this kind of situation unhappiness leads to prosocial behavior and empathy is not a necessary component. Even if there is no empathy for the other person we are not we are just thinking about welfare or benefit of the other person then also it tends to elevate an individual's mood. So this is negative state relief model where helping sometimes reduces our own negative effect or emotions. The idea is again prosociality that in what manner the person is offering help to the other person and how it impacts the same person. There is also an influence we are helping the other person the person is definitely getting benefit but to what extent we are also

getting benefit in what aspect it can be in terms of benefit in return or it can be in terms of reducing one's own negative state.

The other is empathy altruism that means it feels good to help others. Again there is no expectation that I will get something in return but definitely when we are helping the other person then it is going to generate some positive effect within us it gives some kind of calmness and satisfaction that we have helped the other person and the other person is emanating positive emotions. According to this model empathy altruism this suggestion that some prosocial acts are motivated solely by the desire to help someone in need. It is simple idea that I am helping because he needs some help and if he becomes happy then it gives me immense satisfaction. The powerful feeling of empathy provides validating evidence to the individual that he or she must truly have the other person's welfare.

The person provides help simply because the victim needs help and because it feels good to provide the help. Now this help can be that even a person who is in need and it is his birthday we just offer him or gift him a birthday cake on his birthday that will bring a smile on his face. So, bringing or seeing that smile on the person's face is actually empathy altruism that you are trying to understand the problem and you are trying to help and that in return will give you some immense satisfaction. So, this is empathy altruism where understanding or having concern for the other person needs or negative emotions and how you can heal that person. The motivation to help can be sufficiently strong than the individual who provides help is willing to engage in unpleasant dangerous and life threatening activity.

Now in all the perspectives this is very common that the person who is helping or the helper is engaged in unpleasant dangerous and life threatening activities just to help the other person and in return will give some satisfaction to the person. So, this is empathy altruism perspective. The other is empathy joy hypothesis. It is the view that suggests that helping stems from the positive reactions recipients show when they receive help that is gifts and the positive feelings this in return in turn induces the helper.

It is about validating your help. You are helping the other person and how the person feels that validates you that you have helped the person and you have shown the concern. The joy, the satisfaction, the self-worth, the calmness you experience when we help the other person that is empathy joy hypothesis. Previously it is empathy altruism that you are helping the other person and you are feeling good but in this case empathy joy hypothesis we are helping the other person. The person is also inducing positive effect and at the same time the positive effect that you induce is actually joy.

You enjoy helping the other person. So, this view suggests that helping stems from the positive reactions recipients show when they receive help. It is a matter of that when you are gifting something to the other person how it feels to him and that is your reward. That is your perception of receiving the reward in return. Although it is not a reward but your validation that your help has brought somebody your help has brought a smile on somebody's face and how that person feels validates that you have helped and you have experienced joy in helping the other person. So, this is empathy altruism and empathy joy hypothesis or perspective.

The other is which is very much common to understand is genetic determinism model that is kinship model helping ourselves by helping people who share our genes. It is so obvious that even in families or in relatives the person who is in need we tend to help that person in a very

automatic manner because that person is related to us. There is some genetic relationship with that person and with the aim that the other person who is having the same genes will have better chances of his or her survival. In comparison to those if the person who is not related to us we will think twice of helping that person. So, when we are talking about an altruism or helping behavior then genetic determinism model talks about kinship that how the chances of survival of the genes are very high by helping each other.

So, genes are being transferred from one generation to another. According to this perspective is that pro-social behavior is offered by the kin selection theory and from an evolutionary perspective the key goal which is a key goal of every organism is that getting our genes into the next generation. And for this it is predicted that we are more likely to help others to whom we are closely related than people to whom we are not related. This is but obvious that in a situation if any person who is related to us is there and any person in need who is not related to us definitely our choice will be our decision will be to help a person to whom we are related or the person is very similar to us. So, this is the kinship selection theory when it comes to pro-social behavior.

For example, a series of studies in which participants were asked whom they would choose to help in an emergency and it was predicted that genetic similarity is the basis that people will choose close relative then either as distant relative or a non-relative. So, this is how the pro-social behavior is being fostered in different situations and how pro-social behavior influences the other person and oneself when we offer help in different situations. No doubt the person who needs help is benefited in every sense. There is reciprocation also for the chances of better survival and at the same time when we are helping the other person how we are being influenced by our own act of pro-sociality. It can be joy, it can be empathy, it can be empathy altruism or it can be empathy joy hypothesis.

But ultimately a good pro-social act will definitely have a positive influence on the person who is being helped and the person who has offered help. So, this is how these perspectives that is the reciprocal altruism, negative state relief model, empathy altruism, empathy joy hypothesis and kin selection are different perspectives which have been discussed just now for defining pro-social behavior. So, these are the origins of pro-social behavior that reciprocity, reciprocal altruism, negative state relief hypothesis, empathy altruism hypothesis, empathy joy hypothesis and kin selection theory. The next is social exchange theory. According to this theory this is another perspective, the fifth perspective.

People help because they want to gain goods from the one being helped. People calculate the rewards and cost. So, it is about exchange theory where the rewards and cost is being analyzed. If I am helping the other person then what is the cost that I have to bear and what will the reward that I will gain in helping the other person.

So, it is about give and take. It is about the cost benefit analysis of helping the other person. So, the reward, people calculate rewards and cost of helping others as a mini max strategy. That means increasing the gains and minimizing the loss. So, this is a mini max strategy, a philosophy for minimizing the possible losses or alternatively it can be thought of as maximizing the minimum gain. That means reducing the loss and gaining maximum benefit from one exchange.

So, this is a social exchange theory. So, rewards are incentives in form of internal and external. External rewards can be in form of goods you get in return or it can be social reward or internal reward in form of image or reputation which is very much explicit in nature. You are helping the other person, you are gaining something in return in form of promotion, in form of enhanced image in the society which is very much explicit and apparent to the other members. Now, these rewards can be in form of friendship or gratitude where there are more coalitions or collaborations and people are more likely to help those who are more attractive or important whose approval is desired. Now, in this case people also try to help the person who is attractive or who has some higher position so that there is give and take, there is exchange in return and how people tend to collect those rewards for their help.

It can be internal rewards which are generated by oneself. When helping for example, sense of goodness and self-satisfaction, when seeing someone in distress one would empathize the victim and aroused and distressed. This is something that even in social exchange also that people tend to help the other person, there is empathy, there is understanding of the emotions, there is more concern for the well-being of others. But at the same time internally, implicitly there has to be some exchange as well. So, we may choose to help in order to reduce the arousal and distress and gain something in return.

So, preceding helping behaviour people consciously calculate the benefits and cost of helping and not helping and they help when the overall benefit of helping outweighs the cost. It is but natural as the term implies social exchange theory where reward and cost analysis is been calculated, it is been undertaken, even distress is reduced but the two parties tend to benefit each other based on rewards and cost. Even the person who is helping the person in need, he calculates the cost, he will calculate the risk. In altruistic behaviour the person will not calculate the risk. But in social exchange theory help is given only while calculating the risk involved and in what and to what extent he or she will get in return from the other person.

So, this is social exchange theory. This is fifth perspective of pro-social behaviour. At the same time there are some cultural differences also which are been experienced. For example, collectivism and individualism. Collectivist attend more to the needs and goals of the group and they belong to and the individualistic focus on their own selves. So, people in collectivist cultures they help each other without any doubt whereas in individualistic cultures people tend to take care of themselves first and they think twice to help the other person or not.

So with contrast collectivist would be more likely to help the in group members but less frequent than individualist to help strangers. But this is also a thin line difference that even collectivist culture is existing in any group they will help the in group members. That means they will help the members of the group but they will never help the out groups. That means out groups are strangers for collectivist cultures. So this is how culture also plays a very important role in identifying helping of pro-social behaviours.

Thus we can say that pro-social behaviours occurs because such actions increase positive effect or decrease negative effect as we have already discussed in the other models that is altruism joy hypothesis and empathy altruism hypothesis. People engage in helpful behaviour either because it feels good or because it makes one feel less bad. Again empathy altruism is the model that we are referring here. Then the emotion that is elicited by performing a pro-social act is sometimes labelled helpers high a feeling of calmness self-worth and warmth. What you

feel when you help the other person? It is about the joy you experience in helping the other person that is helpers high a feeling of calmness self-worth and warmth.

So this is how pro-social behaviours are being studied by social psychologists with different perspectives in terms of reciprocal altruism, negative state relief model. It can be empathy altruism or it can be empathy joy hypothesis or social exchange. But the gist is that whenever we are helping the other person the two people are benefited in terms of effect and in terms of benefits. So I will stop my discussion here. I will continue the discussion about the same aspect in the next class. Thank you so much. Thank you.