Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 19: Social Influence - Part I

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I am going to start with another lecture that is social influence. This is a very important discussion of this module that how individual behavior or group behavior alters or an individual changes or modifies his behavior as per the situation, requirement or his own understanding of his own behavior and the other person's behavior. So definitely there is going to be some influence in terms of another person in the environment, another situation that a person faces. It can be another request or it can be another demand of the situation that how a person tries to adjust with the environment, adapt to the environment based on his needs as well. So when a person has certain needs, social needs for example, sense of belongingness or there is some requirement of change in the behavior, then definitely there are certain factors in the environment which influences the individual to a larger extent.

So before going into more details about this concept of social influence, let us define that what is social influence. It comprises the ways in which individuals adjust their behavior to meet the demands of a social environment. Now as I mentioned that the environment can be personal requirement in terms of satisfying sense of belongingness to seek some approval, to seek some affiliation or to adhere to another to some norms of the group or to the situation. So in order to meet to the demand of the environment, the person tries to alter or modify his own behavior or the members of the group makes an effort to alter or modify their behavior.

Now this influence can be perceived in various forms in form of process of conformity. The basic meaning that when a person wants to adhere to a particular group, the person adheres or aligns with the norms, the rules of the group in a very unquestioning manner so that the membership can be maintained. It can be socialization when people tend to interact with different kind of people in any particular social situation. It can be peer pressure because of pressure from the society or social pressure or from peers or friends or colleagues. The person tries to adapt the environment or adjust to the environment and tries to modify his own behavior.

It can be obedience that someone has instructed any higher authority has given some instruction and the person obeys those rules and instructions. It can be leadership as the goal which a leader sets for the member or for the group members or for a particular individual and the person tries to follow those instructions or the goals. It can be persuasion when a person makes an special attempt and effort to pursue the other person for modifying the behavior and get the or achieve the goals. It can be sales or it can be marketing. We go to any shop, there are sales marketing executives and how they try to convince or influence the customers in order to purchase a particular product.

All involves, all comprises change in behavior, change in decision to buy a particular product and not a particular product. It can be an individual requirement for sense of belongingness,

sense of approval or seeking approval. It can be an individual's need to adhere to a particular group and they try to align with the norms of the group. All these patterns of behaviors involve a process of social influence. Typically social influence results from a specific action, command or request.

As I mentioned that it can be a specific action in terms of aligning with the norms of the groups. It can be a command like the members tend to receive a command from the leader. It can be a request also in terms of compliance. But people also alter those attitudes and behaviors in response to what they perceive others might do or think. That means, sometimes any celebrity who endorses any product, it actually alters the behavior of the customer because a person as a customer changes his behavior and decision to buy that particular product and they are being influenced, they are being impressed, they are being affected by those endorsements.

So this is how the social influence takes place in our day to day life. The idea here to discuss is that how daily life examples can be incorporated to understand this process of social influence which requires lot of alteration in human behavior. So in 1958 Harvard psychologist Herbert Kelman identified three broad categories of social influence. Social influence is when people appear to agree with others but actually keep their dissenting opinions private. They tend to comply with the group decision, maybe they are not in favor of a particular decision but to adhere to the group to maintain the membership, to maintain social relations with the other members of the group, they tend to comply with what the other members say or do so.

This is another way of social influence that is compliance. The other is identification. When people are influenced by someone who is liked and respected such as a famous celebrity. As I quoted the example that any Bollywood celebrity who endorses for any particular skin cream or fairness cream, how female customers do get influenced and tend to identify themselves with those celebrities through that purchase of that product. This is identification.

Again there is influence of a celebrity on a customer and how they change their behavior. It can be internalization that people have high desire to be part of any group and they agree and they try to associate with that group in a very unquestioning manner. They will align with that group, they will internalize all the norms and goals of the group no matter the goals are right or wrong or the process of achieving the goal is right or wrong but they are blindly associated with that group in a very unquestioning manner. Compliance, identification and internalization is a process of social influence. That means, social influence can be perceived through different kind of process that is compliance where we accept the command, we accept the request as well to change as per the requirement of the situation.

It can be identification while we tend to identify with the celebrity who is endorsing the product. It can be any political leader as well or internalization when people accept a belief or behavior and agree both publicly and privately. They will not question the group leader that

why they have taken a particular decision. Since it is their high desire to be part of that group, they will accept everything in a very unquestioning manner and in a very faithful and blindly manner. Next comes the other aspect of social influence is social loafing and social facilitation.

If I talk about these kind of two process, then we have to also discuss about that how this process takes on and it is a consequence of group behavior. The consequence is termed in terms of group cohesiveness. For instance, when people have very strong desire to be part of the group, they tend to align with the group goals in such a strong manner that they associate themselves in each and every aspect. They tend to become a part of the group in a very desirable fashion and that desire is being perceived in form of participation, conformity and cooperation. This kind of behavior is something that people take active interest participation in group activities, group decision making which makes clear that the person wants or has a high desire to be part of the group and they become very close to each other.

There is lot of cohesiveness, but this kind of tendency evolves when the group size also increases. As a group size increases, people tend to become very close to each other and they try to support one another for achieving different kind of task or goals. This sounds to be a very positive term that is cohesion or cohesiveness, but at the same time every positive thing also has some negative consequences as well. When we are talking about social loafing and social facilitation, it is actually a consequence of group cohesiveness, extreme group cohesiveness or high level of group cohesiveness. When group size increases, then people tend to shed off their responsibilities on to others.

This is social loafing that how people tend to develop a tendency that since group size has increased, many members have joined the group, then they can do that job why only me. They tend to shed off their responsibilities on to other members of the group. This is a process or consequence of group cohesiveness that is termed as social loafing. Whereas, when we are talking about social facilitation, it is about that how the presence of the other members of the group influences an individual's participation. Now for instance, any student has to perform while playing guitar on the stage, then how the response of the audience will facilitate the performance of the student while playing guitar will determine his overall performance.

Now this is social facilitation, but again this kind of process evolves only when group cohesion is high, when the size of the group increases and how people or the audiences or the other members of the group facilitate or impair the performance of the other member of the group. This is what social loafing and facilitation refers to in brief. We will go into detail later on. So when we are talking about social loafing and facilitation, the first discussion that evolves is that these two process are the consequences of high group cohesion which can be measured based on participation, conformity and cooperation. So both social loafing and social facilitation are based on the influence of others presence on a performance as both are a part of group behavior.

Whether it is social loafing, again one member is not performing, the other member is performing in terms of shedding of the responsibility or it can be social facilitation that other members will facilitate or not facilitate the performance of one particular member in the group. It is a consequence of group cohesiveness. So we can say that social loafing is the tendency of group members to exert less individual effort on an additive task as the size of the group increases. Every member has individual role to play but on top of that definitely the leader will also assign or impose some additive task to the group members. If those additive tasks are not being performed or being shredded off on to other persons then it evolves a tendency of social loafing.

Now the important thing to understand is that what are those additive tasks? They are the ones in which the contribution of each members are combined into a single group output. A member is doing the normal role, is playing a normal role but if some additive task is also given to that person then every person has some additive task and every task is being combined as one group goal or output. So every person is doing some extra or additive task but at the same time every task is being combined and is transformed into a single group output that is additive task. Once this additive task is not accepted by the group member and it is being transferred or shaded off on to the other person's shoulders or member of the group then this tendency is known as social loafing. Once on such task some people will work hard while others goof up and do less than they would if working alone.

So this is a behavioral tendency. We cannot say in a very explicit manner that social loafing exists in any group but it is very much perceived, very much visible based on the behavior that one person who has been assigned some additive task and it is being shredded off on to the other person while some other persons are doing the same task then it is social loafing. Other psychologists refer to such effects as social loafing that is reduction in efforts when individuals work collectively compared to when they work individually. So as soon as all the efforts are being combined into one people tend to shed off their responsibility on to others. Had it been that any individual person will get some recognition then at that point of time every individual would perform their additive task also in a very efficient manner.

But sometimes there are situations when all the efforts are being combined into one single group output. Under such circumstances social loafing or tendency of social loafing evolves in any group. But how it can be reduced? Now these tendencies of social loafing facilitation are something that we cannot get away with these tendencies because this is human tendency, human behavior. Human behavior is instrumental in nature but yes these tendencies can be reduced to certain and extent by understanding group members behavior requirement and desire and how those tasks are being assigned in a very tactful manner. So first strategy can be which is the most obvious way of reducing social loafing involves making the output or effort of each participant readily identifiable.

It means that giving recognition to an individual's contribution will definitely reduce the tendency of social loafing. This is in a way that under such circumstances people cannot sit back because they know that they will be recognized for what they are contributing then in that case social loafing can be reduced. When people believe their contribution matters and a strong performance on the part of the group will lead to a desired outcome then social loafing can be reduced. So people tend to work harder because they are being because a performance is being identifiable and acknowledged and at the same time their contribution will add something to the group output as a single output that piece of work will tend to reduce tendency of social loafing and will motivate members to perform and cooperate. Therefore pooling contributions to tasks such as co-writing paper this is an example that 2 authors are there may be the other author can also be acknowledged in writing the scientific article and how that contribution can be acknowledged will definitely tend to reduce the tendency of social loafing.

So this is one way by making the piece particular piece of work of an employee as identifiable. The second is that groups can reduce social loafing by increasing group members commitment to successful task performance and pressures towards working hard will then serve to offset temptations to engage in social loafing. So, increasing or giving commitment to the task or making or forcing or motivating employees to be committed to their work will actually tend to reduce the tendency of social loafing. In a way in a different way it can be quoted that whenever any member is being assigned any role then commitment has to be shown through motivation through providing the resources to the member and how they are performing the task in a very efficient manner. When all the resources are being provided to the member to perform their own task or role then definitely the commitment level also goes high.

So this is another way to reduce social loafing when group members tend to increase their commitment to the task. This will offset temptations to engage in social loafing. The third strategy can be that it can be reduced by increasing the apparent importance or value of a task giving a particular task to the group member and adding more importance to the member and to the task that whatever task they will complete is important and is a valuable piece of job to be performed then definitely tendency of social loafing can be reduced because that gives more motivation and commitment to the member and at the same time the performance is also enhanced while reducing the tendency of social loafing. And the fourth strategy is that people are less likely to loaf if they are given some kind of standard of performance. Here standard of performance means feedback when people are working in a group and every member is actually performing their role how other members are giving feedback for the other person's performance will actually tend to engage the person more in the task rather than loafing.

This is another strategy for instance a group of students who are working on a project and the other members or the other students of the group tend to give their feedback to their co classmates or fellow mates about their own performance that where they are missing where they have performed well that will engage the person more into the task other than indulging in the tendency of social loafing. So, this is another way another strategy to reduce the tendency of social loafing. Next comes social facilitation. As I mentioned earlier that how the presence

of other members of the group facilitate or impair the performance of an individual that is the process of social facilitation. When this process involves then definitely there is an influence of group members on the performer.

It is the tendency for the presence of others sometimes to enhance an individual's performance and at the other times to impair it. It is a state of heightened emotional arousal in terms of tension or excitement that people experience in the presence of others. A student who is playing guitar on the performing guitar on the stage there will be audiences who will encourage the student to perform well and at the same time there will be some audiences who would try to demotivate or discourage the person to perform well on the stage. At the same time the performer will also experience different kind of emotional arousals in terms of tension and excitement because of there is fear of evaluation, there is fear of performing all alone on the stage and how the person tries to cope during its performance.

This is social facilitation. Now in this concept of social facilitation Zizong has extended the understanding of social facilitation based on arousal. Here arousal is emotional arousal that what an individual feels when he is excited definitely the performance goes high. If the person is tensed then definitely the performance will go down. This is but obvious but at the same time he has also included one more aspect in the process of social facilitation in terms of preparedness of an individual. According to Zizong in the process of social facilitation if the person has learned the task very well and he is on the stage he has to perform a task then definitely that emotional arousal is very positive and the person will perform better.

If the task is not well learned then the emotional arousal is in form of tension and the performance is inhibited or hampered or the person is demotivated to perform in a very efficient manner. This is an addition to the process of social facilitation which was given by Zizong in 1965 that the mere presence of others would only facilitate a well-learned response but it could inhibit a less practiced or new response. But why and how? It was noted that the presence of others increases physiological arousal that means more energy is generated in our body and as a result any dominant response will be facilitated. If the task is well-learned then the dominant response will be excitement because the task is well-learned and the performance is going to be enhanced. So that excitement is the dominant response and that dominant response will facilitate the performance.

This means that we can focus better on something we know or we have practiced when we are aroused. So whenever the task is well-learned or well-practiced and the arousal is positive it is excitement then the person feels facilitated by the audiences and by his own physiological arousal. But at the same time sometimes the physiological arousal will also create problems when we are dealing with something new or complex. For instance, it is a vice versa example that if the task is not well-learned or the task is very complex, difficult to perform then the physiological arousal can be in terms of tension not excitement and that tension will be the dominant response and immediately the performance will go down. So according to Zizong

it is not only presence of others it is also the physiological arousal that plays a very important role while creating a dominant response and depending on the performance of the individual.

So this is social facilitation that the presence of others will lead to some physiological arousal where the performance will be facilitated in terms of inhibition or in terms of enhancement in the performance of the subject. So this is social facilitation. Now this process of social facilitation has been supported by some theories as well. This reasoning came known as a drive theory of facilitation that the emotions are driving in a particular direction that driving is either it is inhibited or impaired or it is enhanced. It is all dependent on your physiological arousal.

So according to Zizong this reasoning is termed as drive theory of facilitation because it focuses on the arousal which is drive based effects on performance. If it is excitement and the task is well-learned the performance will be enhanced. If the task is not well-learned or well-practiced and arousal is negative in terms of tension the performance is impaired or inhibited. So the presence of others will improve individual's performance when they are highly scaled at the task in question. In this case the dominant response would tend to be correct.

This is so obvious because there is more motivation and confidence. Task is well-learned. Physiological arousal is in form of excitement. The dominant response is definitely going to be correct because it is a positive combination of factors including the environment and individual and how you are responding to the audience will be very much correct. That will interfere with performance when they are not highly skilled.

For instance when they are learning to perform for the dominant responses would not be correct in that case. This is the vice versa that when the task is not well-learned then the performance is going to be inhibit or impaired. However at the same time social psychologists have also talked about fear of evaluation that can inhibit, impair or enhance the performance. So social psychologists have also talked about the evaluation apprehension idea when they are also talking about social facilitation. So researchers have thought that performance might sometimes be disrupted by the presence of the audience because of apprehension about having their performance evaluated.

Now you remember any presentation and how the professors or the judges have evaluated your performance and what kind of apprehension you have for your performances that also inhibits or enhances individual's performance. So along with social facilitation if physiological arousal was another factor then actually it was another factor that determines social facilitation is the evaluation apprehension idea among members of the group. So evaluation apprehension concerns over being evaluated by others such concern can increase arousal and so contributes to social facilitation effects. So evaluation apprehension is another determinant of social facilitation. Social psychologists have also talked about cognitive overload which leads to destruction conflict theory determining the process of social facilitation.

So according to social psychologists not only the presence of others is enhancing or impairing the performance of the employees but it is the performer's role also that play very importantly in performing the task when the person experiences cognitive overload. Here cognitive overload means that whenever the performer or any employee is performing the task he is distracted by the audiences and based on that distraction the performance also gets inhibited or impaired or encouraged. So according to social psychologist either as an audience or as co-actors can be distracting and for this reason it can produce cognitive overload. Cognitive overload refers to all the elements in the environment which a person tends to perceive and they tend to then filter out the important and essential and non-essential elements and in the process of filtering out the performance is being impaired or enhanced. So such overload can result in a tendency to restrict one's attention to as focus only on essential cues or stimuli while screening out non-essential ones.

So several findings offer support for this view known as destruction conflict theory. Whenever the person who is performing tends to perceive all the elements in these all the stimuli in the environment and how they tend to filter out the more in they are into process of filtering out the essential and non-essential stimuli in the environment the more they get distracted. So this is another element of social facilitation. So according to destruction conflict theory social facilitation stems from the conflict produced when individuals attempt simultaneously to pay attention to the other people and on to their performance. That means the attention has distracted sometimes they are focusing on the audience and sometimes they are focusing on their task.

So whenever there is distraction social facilitation or the tendency of social facilitation also involves in that situation. So this is how cognitive overload in form of distraction, fear of or apprehension of evaluation, physiological arousal which plays a dominant response in the performance all determines the process or tendency of social loafing in any group situation. So these are the two ways in which social influence can be experienced by social psychologist or by an individual which is not being stigmatized or labeled but they are being perceived in the group environment in the group situation that how people behave or change their behavior when they are being influenced by different type of people in the environment. So this is social loafing and social facilitation. Next comes another aspect of social influence that is conformity and compliance.

Confirmity tendency of an individual to adhere to the group norms so as to maintain membership. This in a very literal meaning we tend to obey the instructions or the request that is being received by higher authority or any member in the group and we tend to perform the task accordingly. But there is a reason that why people confirm, why people comply. There is a desire to be associated with the group, there is a desire to align with the group, there is a desire to have social relationships with the other members of the group and people tend to be influenced by the group norms. So when we are talking about group norms, sorry conformity and compliance it also becomes essential to talk about that what are group norms.

So group norms are the spoken or the unspoken rules that guide how team members interact, collaborate, behave effectively and work efficiently. Every group has certain norms and rules that how every member is going to behave and work. There are certain norms, there are certain roles, there are certain status of every group member they adhere to those roles, status and norms and rules and then they tend to interact with other members of the group in a very orderly manner. As soon as any member tries to deviate from that norms, the group can develop a tendency to deviate and disband. So when we are talking about conformity then it becomes important to talk about group norms and they are implicitly agreed upon rules and standards of behavior.

There is no rule book written, written rule book where norms are being identified. It is something when the group starts functioning then certain rules becomes a nomenclature that this is how we are functioning and people tend to accept in a very unquestioning manner. They will not question it, they will tend to follow the pattern that how the group is functioning or operating. So this is known as group norms which is a result of majority influence when many other maximum members of the or majority of members are performing or behaving in a typical fashion then other members also tend to follow the same pattern.

This is group norms or conformity. The most important thing is that when we are talking about group norms then group norms are of two types, proscriptive and prescriptive. Proscriptive which refers to the dos and don'ts. So that group is intact and group is functional. Again unspoken rules but this is how the group is functioning that this is permissible, it is not permissible. Whereas the prescriptive norms they are often harsher and have dire consequence when not followed.

How the group will function, how individual will perform in a very precise manner then certain norms are there. If those norms are not being aligned by the performer or the member of the group then definitely it has dire consequences to an extent that the group develops a tendency to disband. So these are the ways that how we tend to confirm. We have a desire to be the part of the group, we have a desire to align with the group and we are ready to accept the norms or align with the norms of the group in a very unacceptable manner and those norms are unspoken which are very much not written also but still people tend to follow those norms.

For instance following a dress code there can be no rule written. It is only an unspoken thing because every member is perceiving every group member in a uniform code and they also follow the same pattern. They will not break the norm that they would come in civil code. This is how group norms are being identified. So group conformity can be defined as adjusting one's behavior to align with the norms of the group. When you have a desire to align with the group then we tend to adjust, we modify our behavior while confirming to the group norms that I agree whatever the group is performing.

So this is group conformity and as a member of the group people desire for acceptance by the group and are susceptible to confirming to the group norms. So this is group conformity. In what ways do people confirm? We are discussing with one notion that people have high desire to be part of the group. That is fine but there can be different process, there can be different way that why people confirm. It is not a very direct process that we are part of the group and I am confirming.

There can be different factors which define this process of group conformity. So there are different sources that how people confirm. It is peer pressure, it is social influence although we are discussing in a very broad manner but still it has become a part that how people confirm. It is social influence, compliance, obedience and intense indoctrination. Peer pressure, generally the term is peer pressure. The pressure we experience through our friend circle but peer pressure has a different meaning where peer pressure means that people has fear that they will be ridiculed by their friends itself.

This is fear of being ridiculed. So this is a fear of rejection or being ridiculed which leads to conformity. When people are being rejected, they are being embarrassed to avoid these kind of negative feelings people tend to confirm to the group norms in order to avoid such kind of embarrassment. So people tend to confirm and when an individual see the other group member being ridiculed, he or she may fear similar rejection and thus confirm to the group. In order to avoid rejection, in order to avoid the feeling of embarrassment, a person will prefer to confirm to the group norms.

Another is compliance. It is a type of social influence where an individual does what someone else wants them to do. It can be a request or suggestion. For instance, any senior authority would request a middle level manager to perform or take a particular task or job and the middle level manager would comply to what the senior authority has asked him to do so. So this can be compliance in form of request or suggestion and the person confirms to what it has been requested to him to do.

So this is compliance, another way to confirm. The other is obedience. It is an act of following the orders without question because they come from legitimate authority. It is an instruction and order that has been received by a group member and the person has to obey that order in a very unquestioning manner and the person has to take that order in a very blind fashion. This is another way to confirmity. Now this is so obvious that if a person who is not obedient will definitely has to face some kind of strict action against him and how he has to overcome those consequences.

So we will talk about the other aspect also in the next class. Thank you so much. Thank you.