

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 20: Social Influence -Part II

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with the discussion that how people confirm. We discussed about social influence, peer pressure, today compliance and obedience. Today I will talk about another way to confirm is intense indoctrination. This is a very important and essential part to be discussed that how and why people confirm. Intense indoctrination is completely another process of social influence and it is a process social process in which individuals become member of extreme groups in a very unquestionable and with full commitment.

It is a process through which individuals become members of extreme groups and come to accept the beliefs and norms of a group in a totally unquestioning and highly committed manner. But adherence the strong desire to adhere to that extreme group is so strong and desire is so high that people fail to understand the beliefs and norms to be right and wrong and ultimately as a result they become the part of the group. Because they are so much into blind faith that they fail to understand that what can be the consequence of joining any extreme group. So when we are talking about intense indoctrination based on that why and how people confirm then it is a rigid dogma, doctrine or theory which tends to suppress a good sense and good judgment.

The members understanding becomes clouded, faded, confused and obstructed and the understanding becomes dormant that is meaning temporarily inactive. The member is so much dependent on the group norms that they fail to use the logic, they fail to understand the different dimensions of any norm and they tend to internalize all the rules, norms of the group in a very blind fashion without questioning that what can be the consequence of that particular norm. So a highly indoctrinated people become like automatons that is they become like robots or machines and the members other members tend to modulate their behavior in a very automated fashion. If they say yes they will also say yes, if the members say no then but highly indoctrinated person will also say no to him. They tend to spout and parrot the doctrines that means they mug up the essential significance of joining the group in a very blind fashion and they tend to spout and parrot that doctrine that this is what the group tends to disseminate and this is the aim of their life.

They tend to they spout and parrot doctrine, they believe in dogma that is belief or belief that people are expected to accept as true without questioning. They tend to think that this is the final truth that whatever the group has said it is all truth and nothing beyond this. It can be instead of speaking with common sense or understanding the thinking becomes stymied or suppressed. The members are so much influenced that they deliberately suppress their logical thinking and their thinking completely depends on the other members of the dogma and the doctrine. So this is a process of intense indoctrination which is a part of a process of social influence.

So the next is causes of intense indoctrination. There are number of psychological process involved that explain the causes that lie behind intense indoctrination that why a person tends to engage in this kind of social influence. The first is decreased attentional capacity by keeping new recruits fatigued and inducing the recruits to make public statements. Let us go by the first point that is the decreased attentional capacity. The cognitive capacity of the individual seems to reduced because extreme groups use various tasks to mold them so that they cannot think carefully and systematically.

Reduced attentional capacity increases the tendency of new recruits to think stereotypically. Definitely this becomes a cause of intense indoctrination that when people have weak background, they are ignorant, they have no exposure to the social world. They have high desire to be socially accepted. They seek social approvals from higher authorities. Then they tend to become association with those extreme groups and they are so much influenced by those extreme groups that they tend to lose their understanding or attentional capacity that what can go wrong if I join any particular group.

Now under such circumstances the members of the extreme groups use various tasks to influence and mold the person in such a manner that they fail to tend to think systematically and they tend to think about such a situation in a very stereotypical manner. Now here stereotypical manner means that when other peoples are also thinking the same way then they also develop the same kind of thinking for the other groups or for the social world. The other is by keeping new recruits fatigued. The new members are subjected to deprivation of food, family, sleep and so on which make them emotionally aroused and isolated. Whenever any person is being compelled also to join the group, they are being captivated in a way that they are being deprived of basic necessities.

They are being forced to stay away from the family. They are deprived of food, family and sleep and in such circumstances the member, the new recruit or the member tend to succumb to the rules and norms of those extreme groups and they tend to become more confused and uncertain about what they are thinking and at the same time they also experience reduced confidence and the tendency to conform is often enhanced. When they are actually helpless they have no other way out rather just to follow the extreme group. This is how intense indoctrination takes place and the other is inducing the recruits to make public statements. Once the new recruits become the part of the group, of the extreme groups where internalizing the norms of the groups then they tend to develop the confidence while speaking in the public against the other groups or the other social worlds.

So, recruits are subjected to make public statements using intense peer pressure supporting group views. Now, the group members itself support so much, give so much of support to that particular recruit that he gains confidence to speak in public no matter it is right or wrong for that extreme group itself. So, these are applied to potential members and are compelled continuously over time until recruits reach a position where they accept the group views in a

totally unquestioning manner. So, this is how intense indoctrination takes place. It is a long process where member has to go through a negative process while imbibing all the norms doctrine or dogma in a very unquestioning manner and when they internalize all the norms then the same group itself also supports the same recruit and this and they tend to develop a confidence to speak in public.

So, this is how intense indoctrination takes place, but again a very intense process of social influence. And what is the process of social of intense indoctrination? There is also a process. The first is softening up, the other is compliance, then internalization and consolidation. Softening up, the new members or the recruits are isolated from friends and families and efforts are being made to keep them confused, disoriented and emotionally aroused. They are being lured by offering them different kind of advantages and charms that what can be the consequence of positive consequence of joining that extreme group and at the same time they have been kept away from their family.

So, that they become submissive for their own survival and they are being softened up. They are being softened up in terms of molding them according to the group norms of that extreme group. The other is compliance. During this stage members or the recruits are asked to actively involve themselves in the belief and demand of the role as the member. As soon as the member tries to soften up, then they also develop the desire to take up any particular role in that extreme group.

People tend to comply with that role with that norm and they tend to become part of the group member automatically. Internalization, they tend to agree to the views of the group, they imbibe, they internalize all the norms in a very blind fashion that this is the only the reality and other things are falsified. This is internalization. And the last process is consolidation. This is the merging stage where recruit add strength to make their membership by engaging in costly acts that make it difficult for them to go back.

Once they become the part of the extreme group where they gain so much of confidence to work for that extreme group only, then they gain so much of confidence that they tend to take extreme steps and decision to work for their group and at the same time they also understand that now they cannot go out of that group, they cannot leave that group anymore. They have to be the part of the group itself. They offer all the private assets to the group and discontinue all ties with the past friends that means they are completely isolated. They are disoriented and isolated. And the result is that new members now accept the beliefs and philosophy of the group in a very unquestioning manner and hold negative views about outsiders.

This is after only when people tend to, person tries to internalize all the negative, even the negative aspects of the social world and how they try to pose themselves and the group with whom they are associated to be the positive thing and the final thing and nothing beyond that.

This is consolidation. They isolate themselves from their own significant others that is immediate family members and they have blind faith that how they can contribute to that group itself. This is consolidation. So once softening up, compliance, internalization and consolidation processes over, then only we can say that influence is complete.

This complete here means that the person has completely altered or modified his behavior as per the group norms. This is a process of intense indoctrination. This is another aspect of social influence. Now since we are talking about conformity in different forms like peer pressure, obedience, compliance and intense indoctrination, there is another famous experiment that has explained what is social conformity. This process was very much explained by the classic experiment given by Solomon Asch.

He conducted an experiment in 1951 based on a very simple task, but how it became classical experiment based on the consequence or the results of that study. So Solomon Asch conducted an experiment to investigate the extent to which social pressure from a majority group could affect a person to conform. That person conforms to the majority decision in a very lucid manner. Now he has conducted this experiment which came out to be as a classic experiment in social psychology and the experiment although was very simple and the answer to that experiment was also very much obvious based on judgment task which anybody could do that, but how based on that simple experiment the tendency to conformity was very much proven by Solomon Asch. So Asch was studying visual perception of vision test and that the participants task was to decide which on the bars of the right card 2 was same length as the one on the left card 1.

I will just go to the slide where the task is that the line in card 3 lines in card 2 PC is equal to the line in card 1 the bars or the lines in card 1. The answer is very obvious based on the judgment, but how students in the sample itself confirmed while giving a wrong answer. Now in several experiments were conducted based on assigning different groups for the same task and in each experiment in each every experimental group there was a naive student participation and at the same time there were some confederates as well. Now every group may be 10 to 12 members were there and 5 to 8 groups were created who are performing the same task. Now in every group and every experiment every naive student or the participant was given the instruction to identify that which line on card 2 resembles to the line on card 1.

Now in every group naive participant was there and at the same time some confederates were also there. Confederates were already told earlier prior instructions that they have to give the wrong answer. Now in every group every naive participant was there and in every group confederates were there. As the experiment started the confederates were asked to respond to give the wrong answer and how the naive participant will also respond accordingly. So the naive participant however had no inkling that the other students were not the real students and after the line task was presented each student verbally announced which line either 1 or 2 or 3 match the target line.

So there were certain critical trials that were performed and 18 different trials were performed in the experimental condition. Now confederates gave incorrect responses in 12 of them with ASH referred to as a critical trials. Now in the critical trials in the experimental condition the confederates gave the wrong answer as they were instructed to do so. So the purpose of the critical trial was to see if the participant that is the naive participant who was not knowing that the other participants are confederates in every group would change their answer in order to confirm to how the others in the group responded. Now during the procedure the confederates answered the questions initially correctly however they eventually began providing incorrect answers based on how they had been instructed by the experiments.

Now initially when confederates gave the wrong answer the participants, the naive participants also gave the wrong answer. But during the first part of the procedure the confederates answered the questions correctly however they eventually began providing Incorrect answers based on how they had been instructed by the experiments. Now each person in the room had to start aloud which comparison line A, B or C was most like the target line and the answer was always obvious. But the real participants sat at the end of the row and gave their answer in the last. So in the front rows confederates were sitting and in the last row the participants were sitting because they were made to sit in the last so that they could hear the answer of the confederates so that that conformity can also take place.

Ultimately what happened in the experiment condition confederates whatever the answer gave the participants the naive participants also responded accordingly. But there was another controlled situation in the same experiment and in order to ensure that the average person could accurately gauge the length of the lines the control group was asked to individually write down the correct match. They were not asked to speak they were asked to write down that is the specific feature of the control condition. They were instructed to write down the correct match and according to these results the participants were very accurate in the line judgments choosing the correct answer 99 percent of the time. Because they were supposed to write their answer so they felt less pressure of the peer and they could respond correctly.

Whereas in experimental condition the naive participants felt lot of pressure on themselves because of the confederate participants and they modulated or altered their responses accordingly. So, the results of the ASH conformity experiments came that nearly 75 percent of the participants in the conformity experiments went along with the rest of the group at least one time. That means, every in the experimental condition every naive participant was confirming to the response of the confederate. After combining the trials the results indicated that participants confirm to the incorrect group answer approximately one third of the time. That means, when they were asked to speak up about the response then they were actually confirming to the wrong response.

This is the thin line difference in the experiment that in the experimental condition when they are being asked to response verbally then they gave the answer incorrect. Whereas in the x controlled condition the answer was 99 percent to be the correct. The experimental experiment also looked at the effect that the number of people present in the group had on conformity. When just one confederate was present there was virtually no impact on participants answers. That means, as the group size or participants were increasing the level of conformity to wrong answer was also increasing.

As soon as the number was decreasing initially the number was small of the confederate to give the wrong answer nobody bothered about the wrong answer and they gave the right answer. But actually when the confederate were increasing with the wrong responses then immediately conformity also increased with the wrong answer. So, the presence of two confederates had only a tiny effect and the level of conformity was seen with three or more confederates was far more significant. So, as soon as the size of the group was increasing with the confederates giving wrong answer the conformity to the wrong answer was also increasing. Rish also found that having one of the confederates give the correct answer while the rest of the confederates gave the incorrect answer dramatically lowered conformity.

That means, if even one person who is giving the right response can have the potential to reduce the tendency of conformity. In such situation just 5 to 10 percent of the participants confirm to the rest of the group depending on how the ally answered correctly. Later studies have also supported this finding suggesting that having social support is an important tool in combating social conformity. So, even a single correct response have the potential to reduce the tendency of group conformity and this becomes a very important social tool to combat conformity. So, we can conclude that based on the experiment that why did the participant confirm so readily it was later interviewed by the participants as part of the experiment that most of them said that they do not really believe the confirming answers, but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed or thought peculiar.

That means, the peer pressure was a dominant factor in determining the process of social conformity and few of them said that they really did believe the group answer was correct. So, based on this that fear of geo pressure they confirm to the wrong answer and the second is that they had doubt on their own response because of not having the correct information. So, they decided to confirm. So, this is how two factors were identified based on conformity that people confirm for two main reasons. It is the normative influence and the other is informational influence.

When we talk about normative influence it is about that people want to fit into the group that is why they confirmed even to the wrong answer and the other reason is because they believe that the group has better information then they tend to confirm to the even to the wrong response that is informational influence. So, according to social psychologist and Solomon Asch normative influence is where a person confirms to fit in with the group because they do

not want to appear foolish or be left out that is group pressure. Normative influence is usually associated with compliance where a person changes their behavior publicly, but not their personal beliefs. So, even in the Asch experiment may be the participants were knowing the correct answer, but because of group pressure they confirmed to the wrong answer. For instance, even in friend circles any person who do not like to smoke, who do not wish to smoke, but cannot say no in any social situation and he also smokes at that time.

Although internally he has no wish to smoke or even he is against smoking. So, this is normative influence. This means that any change of behavior is temporary. The other is informational influence. This refers to new information or arguments provided in a group discussion that changes a group members attitudes, beliefs or behavior.

Informational influence is likely to be stronger when a person is uncertain about the correct interpretation of social reality and in a given context and therefore, looks to other group members for guidance. This is informational influence. When the information is incomplete or the information is not sure to be correct or incorrect then the person tries to gain more approval and guidance while confirming to the decision of the group. So, this is how group conformity was established based on the experiment given by Solomon Asch. And the last comes that what are the factors that affect conformity group size.

The bigger the majority group the more people confirms, but only to a certain point. As soon as a group size increases the more the people confirm to a particular decision or idea the more people tend to follow the same decision. This can be a reason the group size is large then definitely there is tendency of conformity. Lack of group unanimity or presence of an ally, the absence of group unanimity lowers overall conformity as participants feel less need for social approval of the group. So, the more people are independent of their decision making the less people confirm to the group decision and the more independent in voicing their own opinion.

Difficulty of the task, the more the task is difficult the more the person has a tendency to confirm because there is no surety of the consequence of the decision. So, for example, when the comparison lines in the Solomon Asch example line A B C were made more similar in length it was harder to judge the correct answer. So, if I go back to this diagram if lines on card 2 are very much apparent, but if we made the length of the lines more similar to that of the correct answer then people will find lot of difficulty in judging the correct line. So, under circumstances the task becomes difficult and people tend to look for more conformity and guidance for the correct answer and conformity increases. That is when we are uncertain it seems we look to others for confirmation and the more difficult the task the greater is the conformity and the other is answered in private.

As in Asch experiment when subjects were asked to write the answer the tendency of conformity was very low and people as participants responded correctly 99 percent of the time.

So, when participants are allowed to answer in private conformity decreases this is because there are fewer group pressures and normative influence is not as powerful as there is no fear of rejection from the group. The responses become secret and at the same time there is no pressure there is no social pressure and people are free to respond on their own. So, the more the people have chance to answer or respond in private the less are the chances of conformity. So, this is the process of social influence in terms of social facilitation, social loafing, conformity and compliance.

So, we are through with this discussion we will continue more discussion based on social influence in the next discussion. Thank you so much. Thank you.